

(21) Application No 9205509.4

(22) Date of filing 13.03.1992

(30) Priority data

(31) 03051470

(32) 15.03.1991

(33) JP

03167727

12.06.1991

03221037

06.08.1991

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H04B 10/16

(52) UK CL (Edition K)

H4B BK16D

(56) Documents cited

GB 2242091 A

EP 0415438 A2

EP 0408905 A2

(58) Field of search

UK CL (Edition K) H4B BK16 BK16D

INT CL⁵ H04B

(54) Optical fiber amplifier and its amplification method

(57) A optical signal from the input terminal 6a is amplified in the optical fiber 1 doped with rare earth. The excitation light from the excitation light source 2 is outputted to the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 through the optical coupler 5. A part of the light is branched from the optical coupler 11 to optical receiver 14 through the band pass light filter 13. The optical receiver 14 converts the received optical signal to an electrical signal and outputs it to the error signal output circuit 14. The receiving current is amplified in the error signal output circuit 14 and supplied to the excitation light source output control circuit 9. The excitation light source output control circuit 9 executes feedback control so as to obtain a constant excitation light level outputted to the optical fiber doped with rare earth from the excitation light source 2, in response to the output signal of the optical receiving circuit 7, and the output signal of the circuit 17.

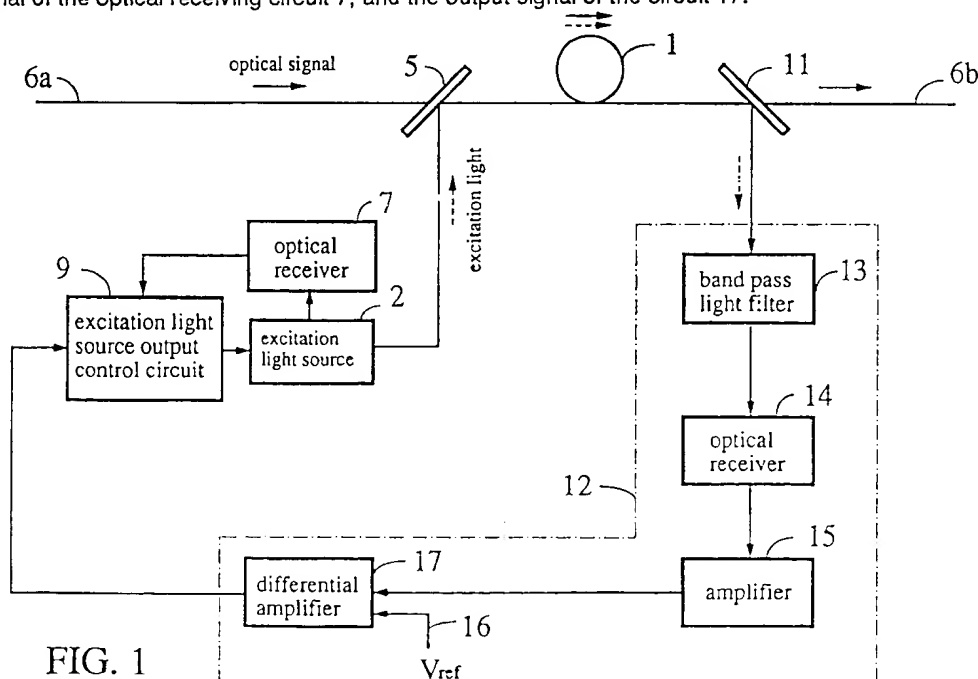


FIG. 1

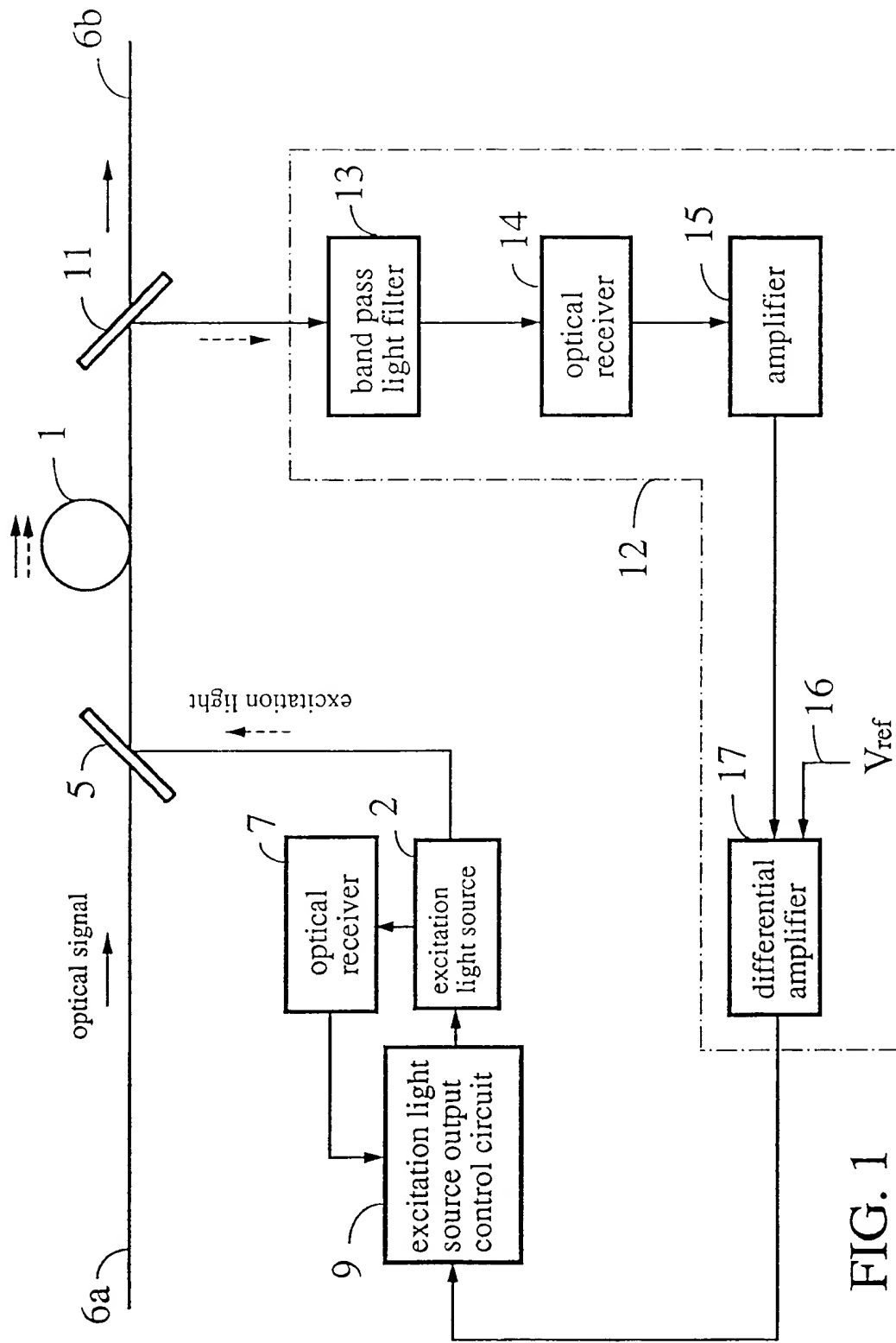


FIG. 1

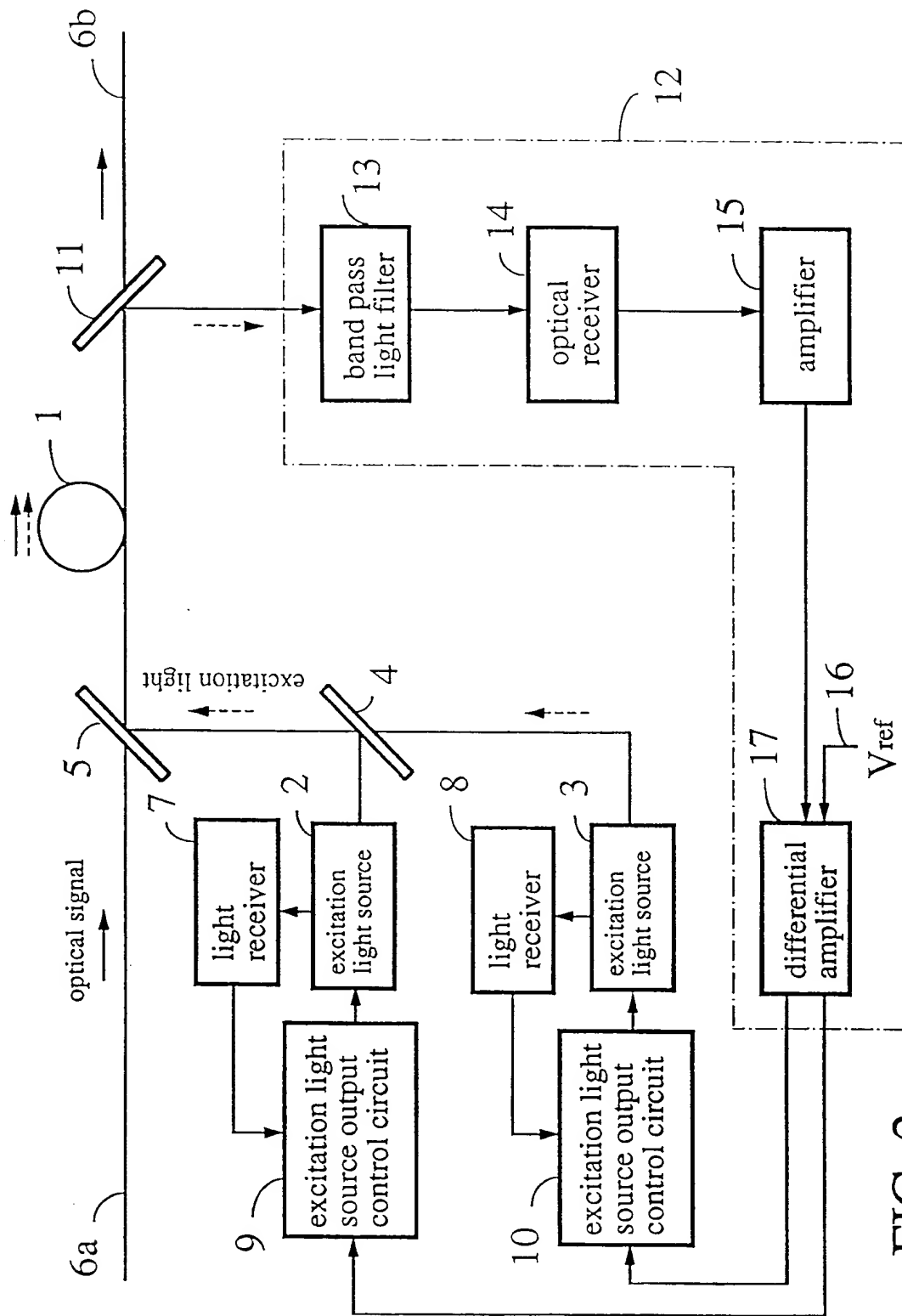


FIG. 2

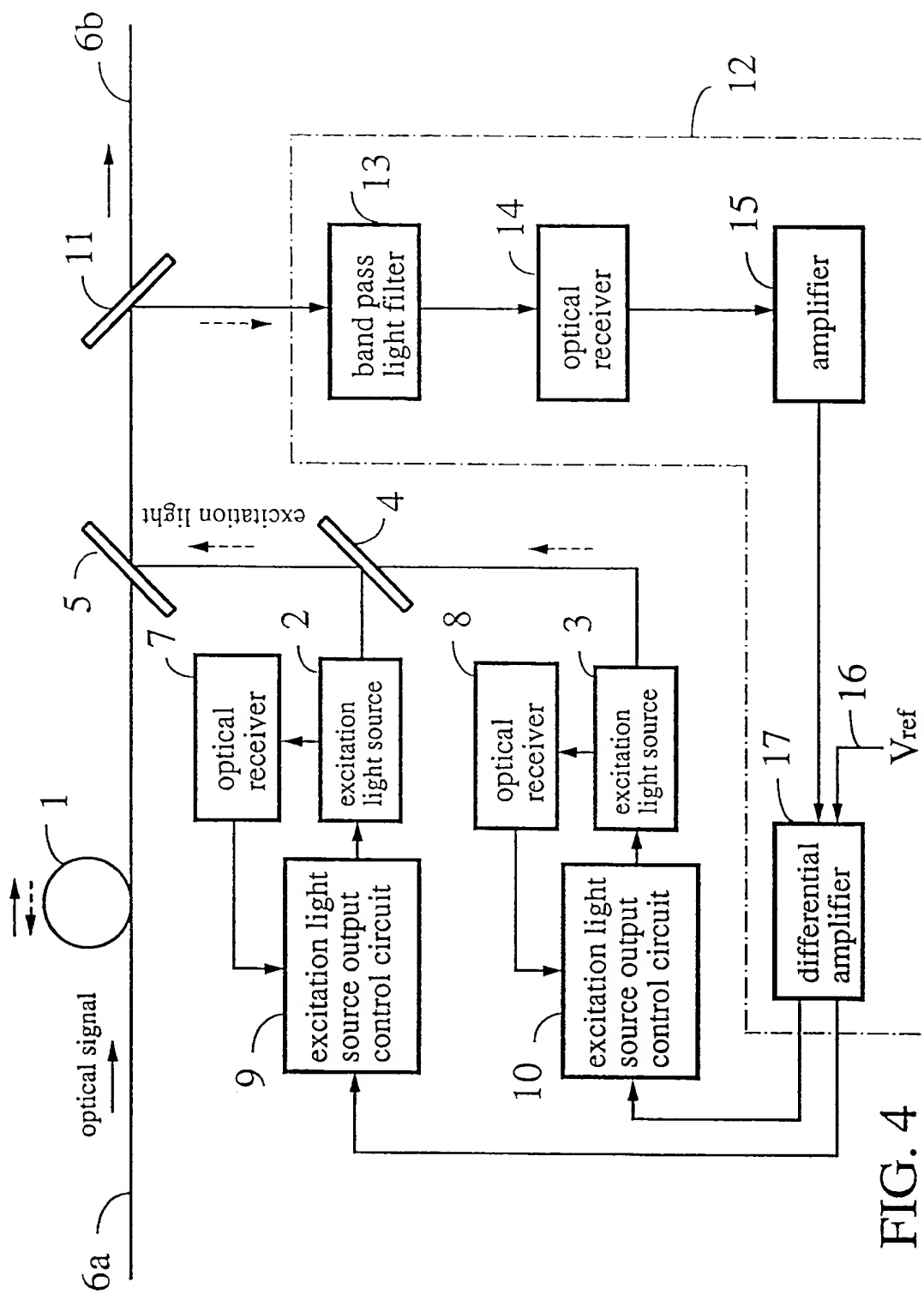


FIG. 4

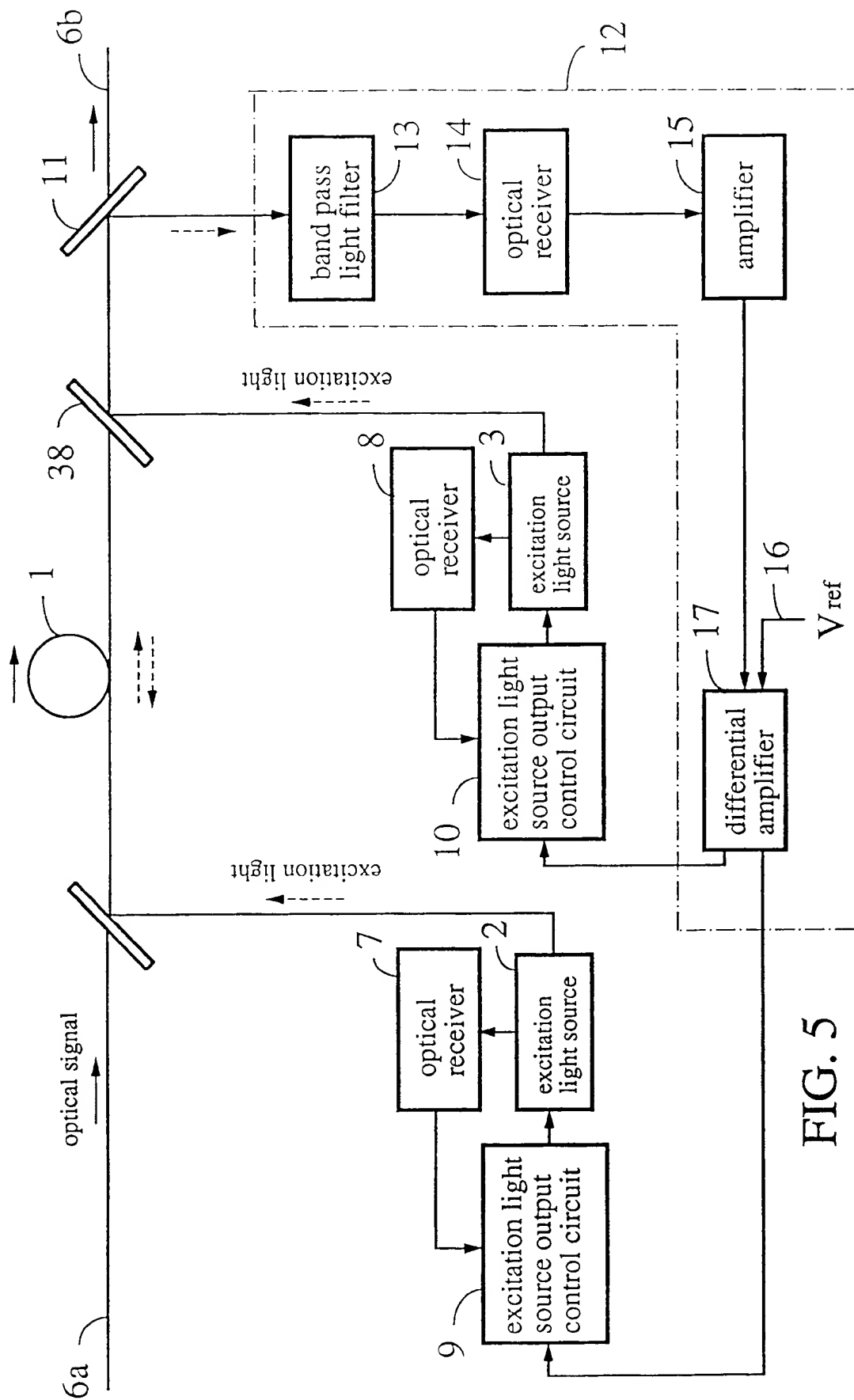


FIG. 5

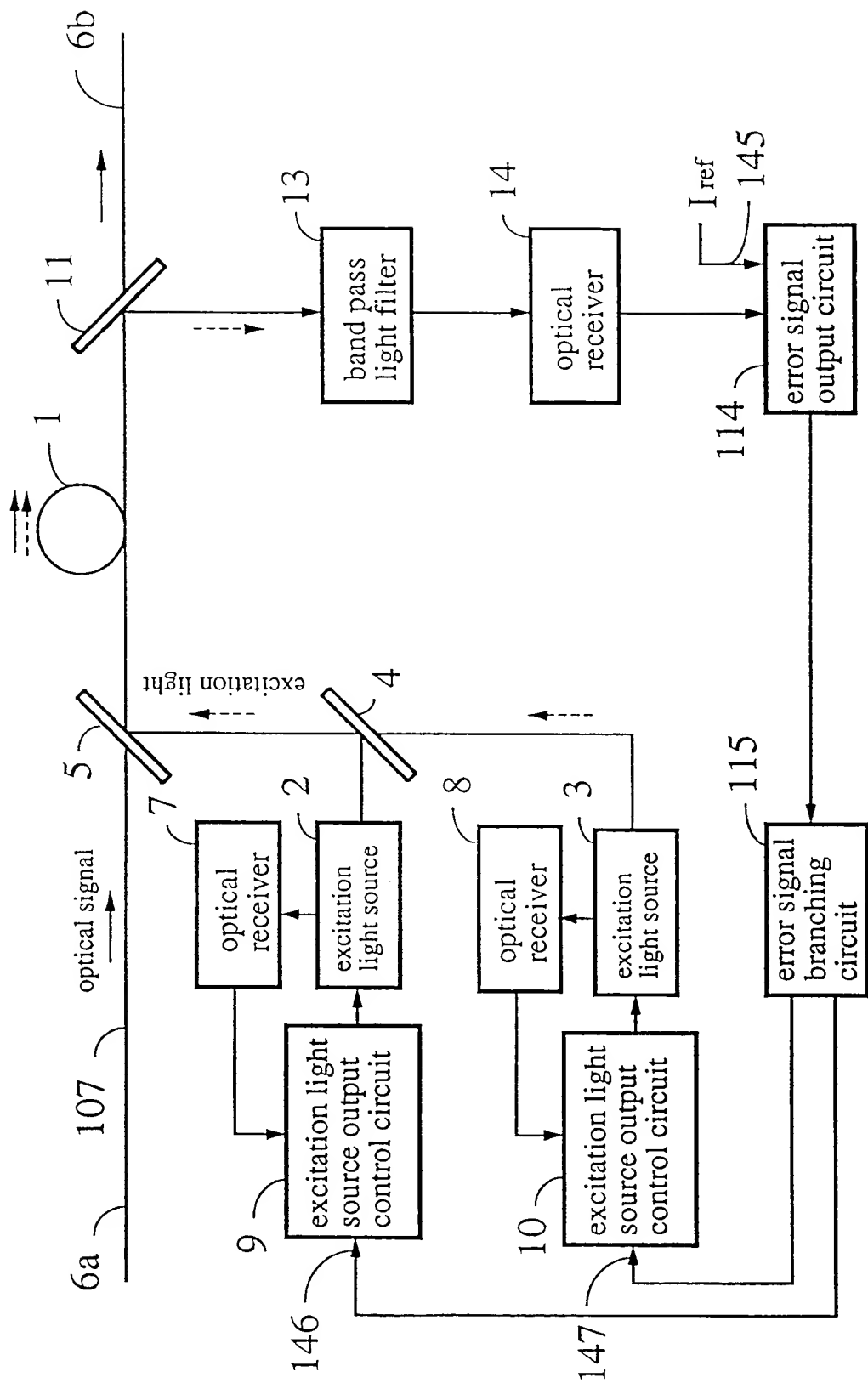


FIG. 6

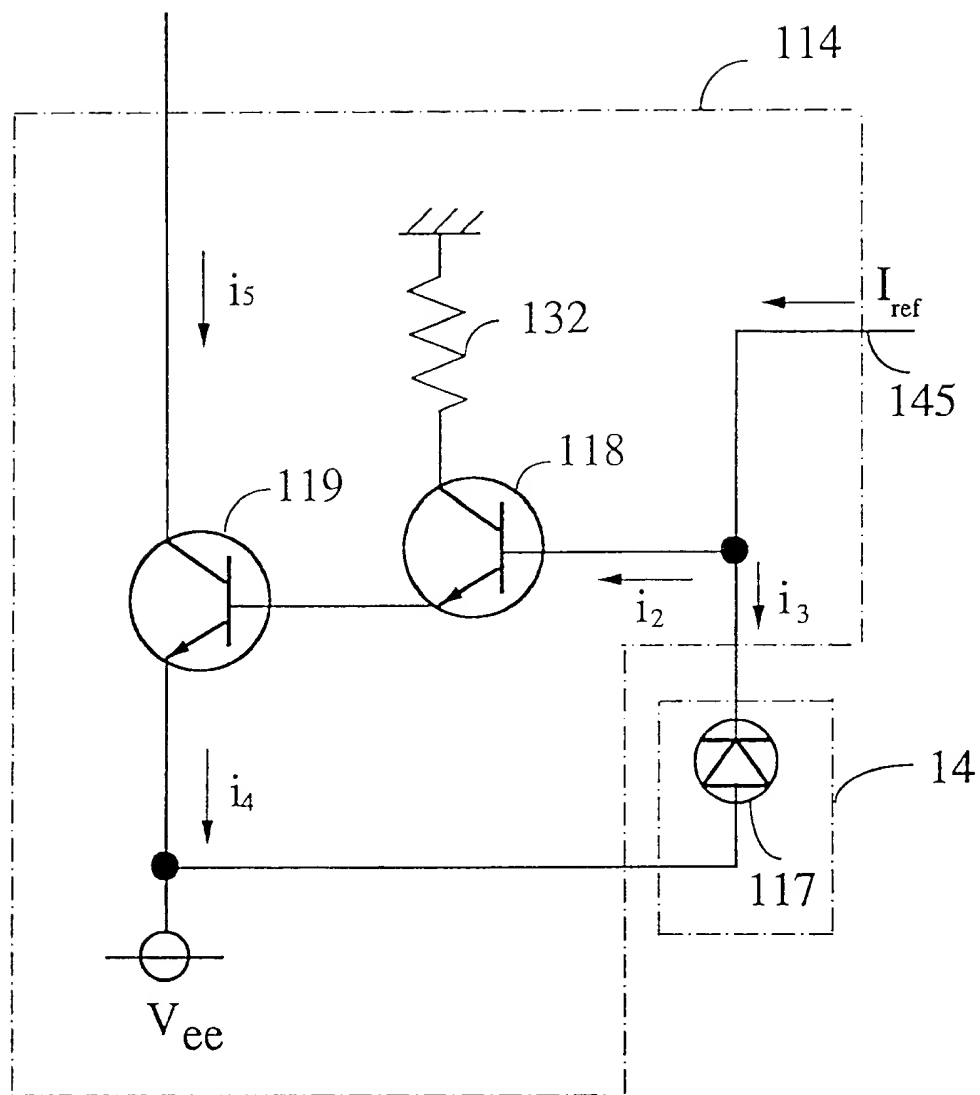


FIG. 7

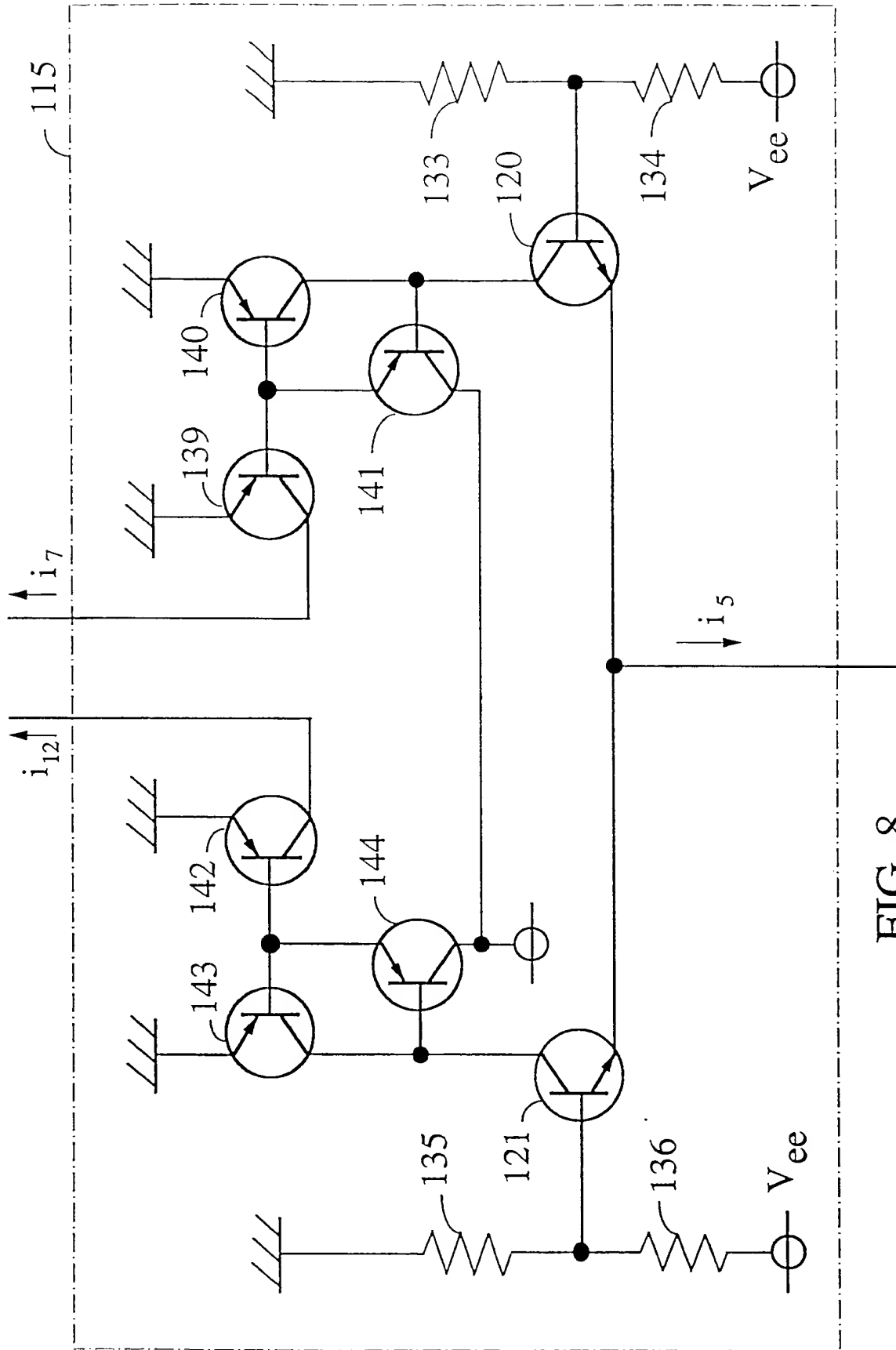


FIG. 8

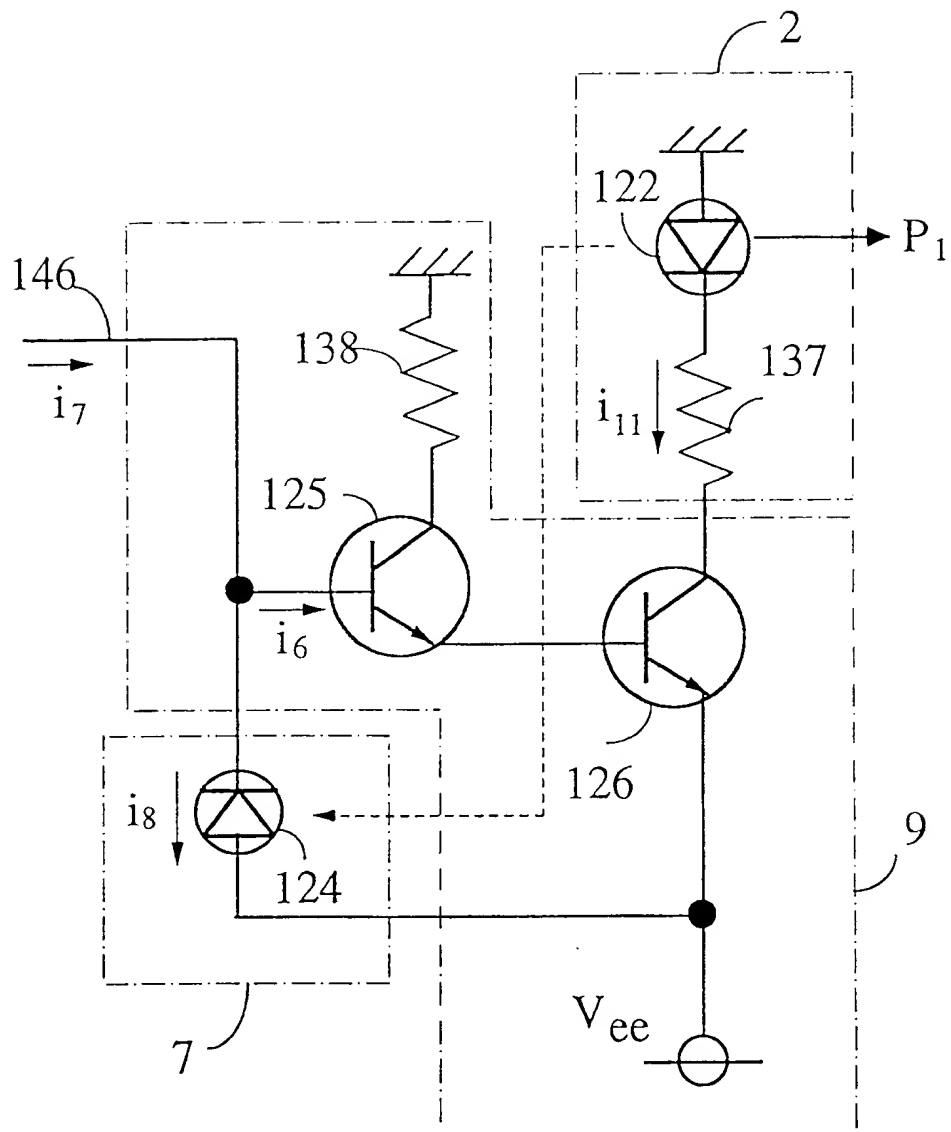


FIG. 9

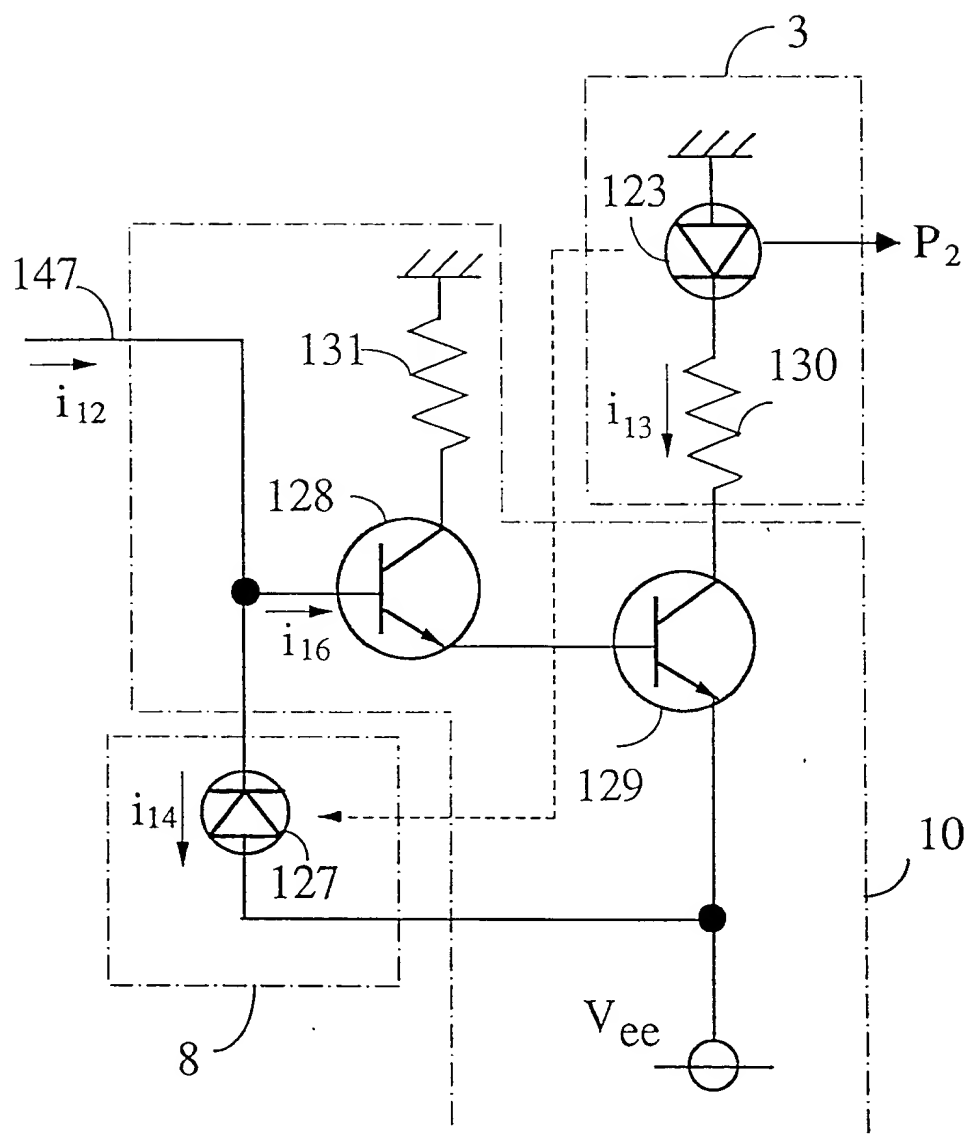


FIG. 10

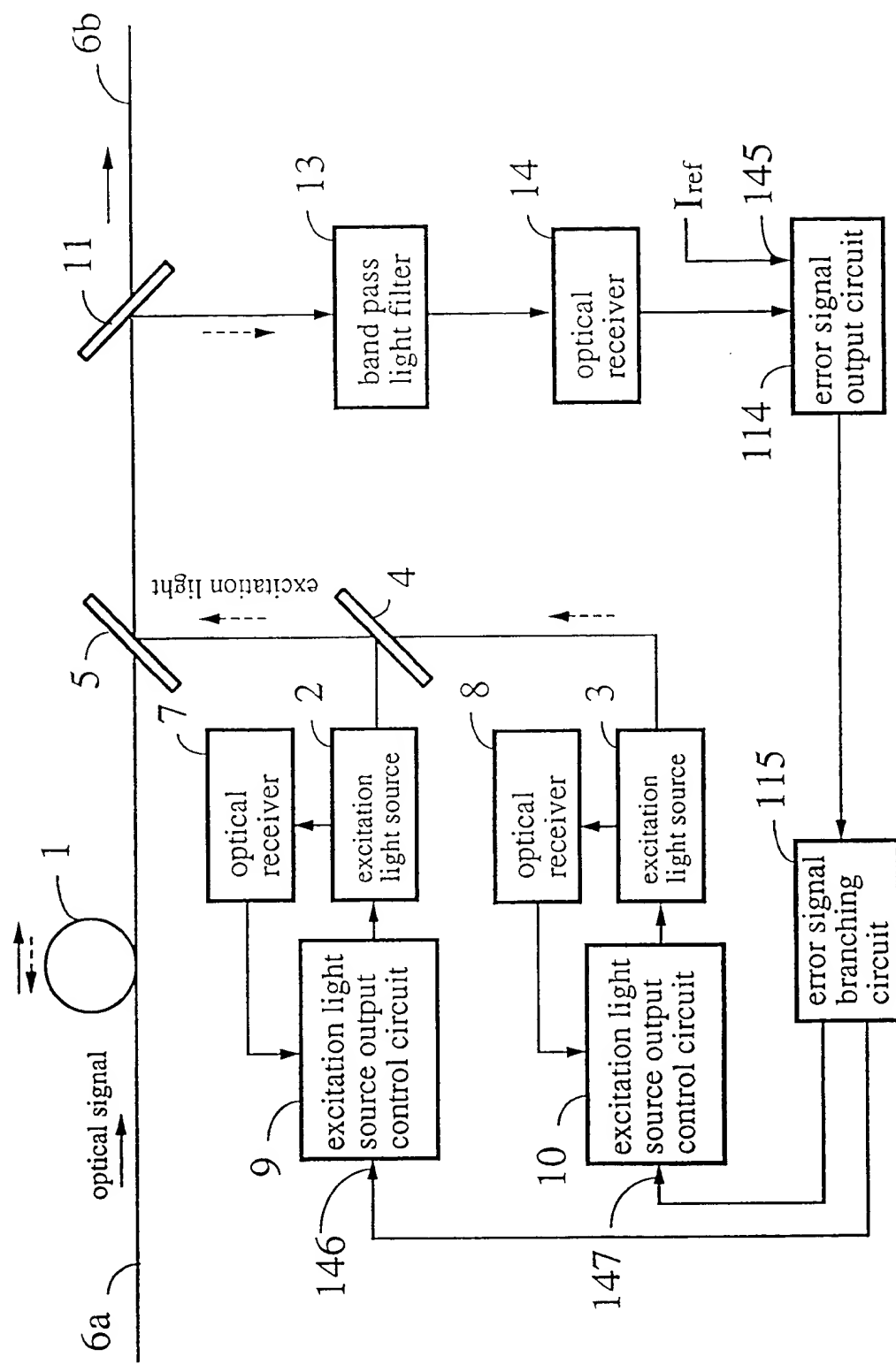


FIG. 11

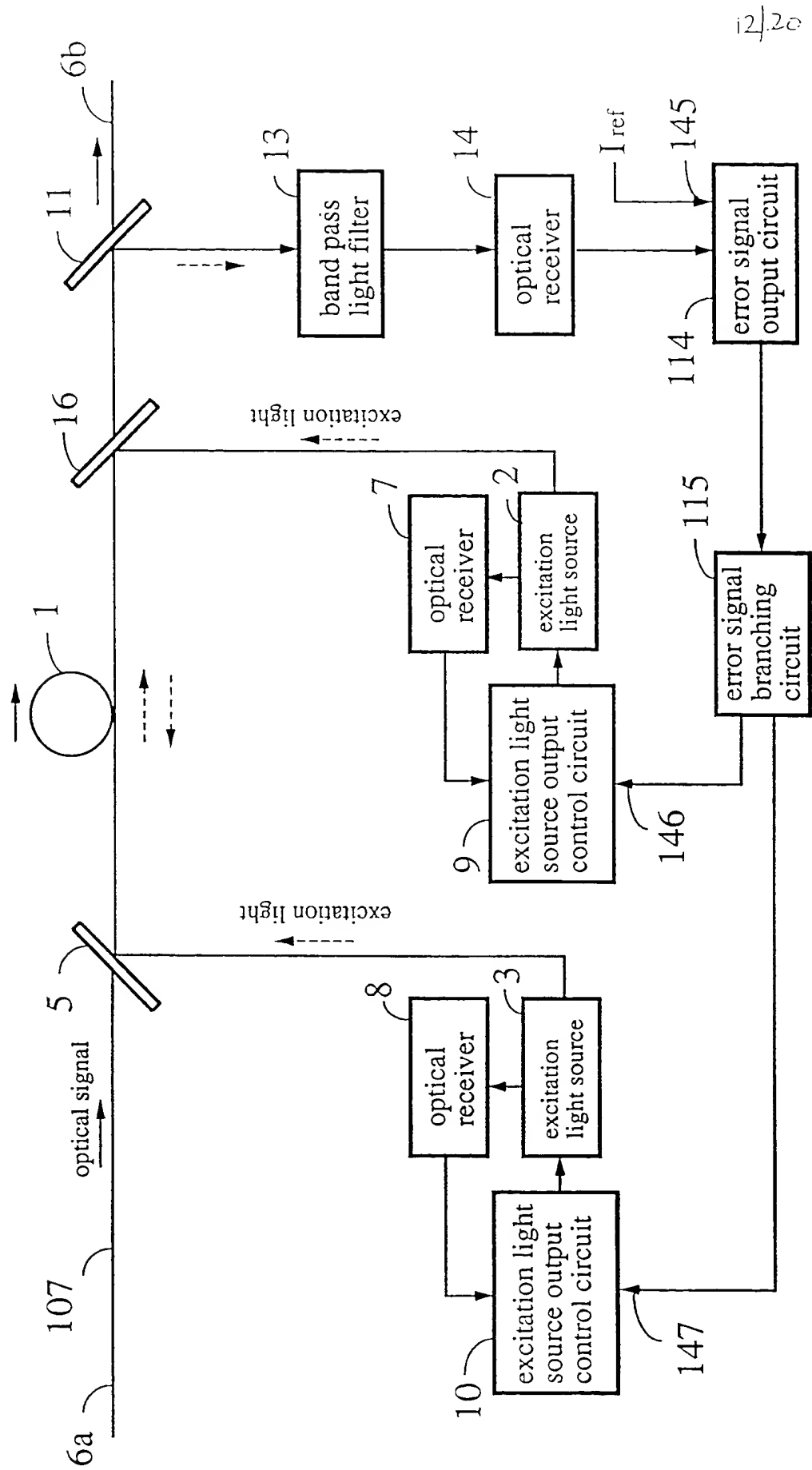


FIG. 12

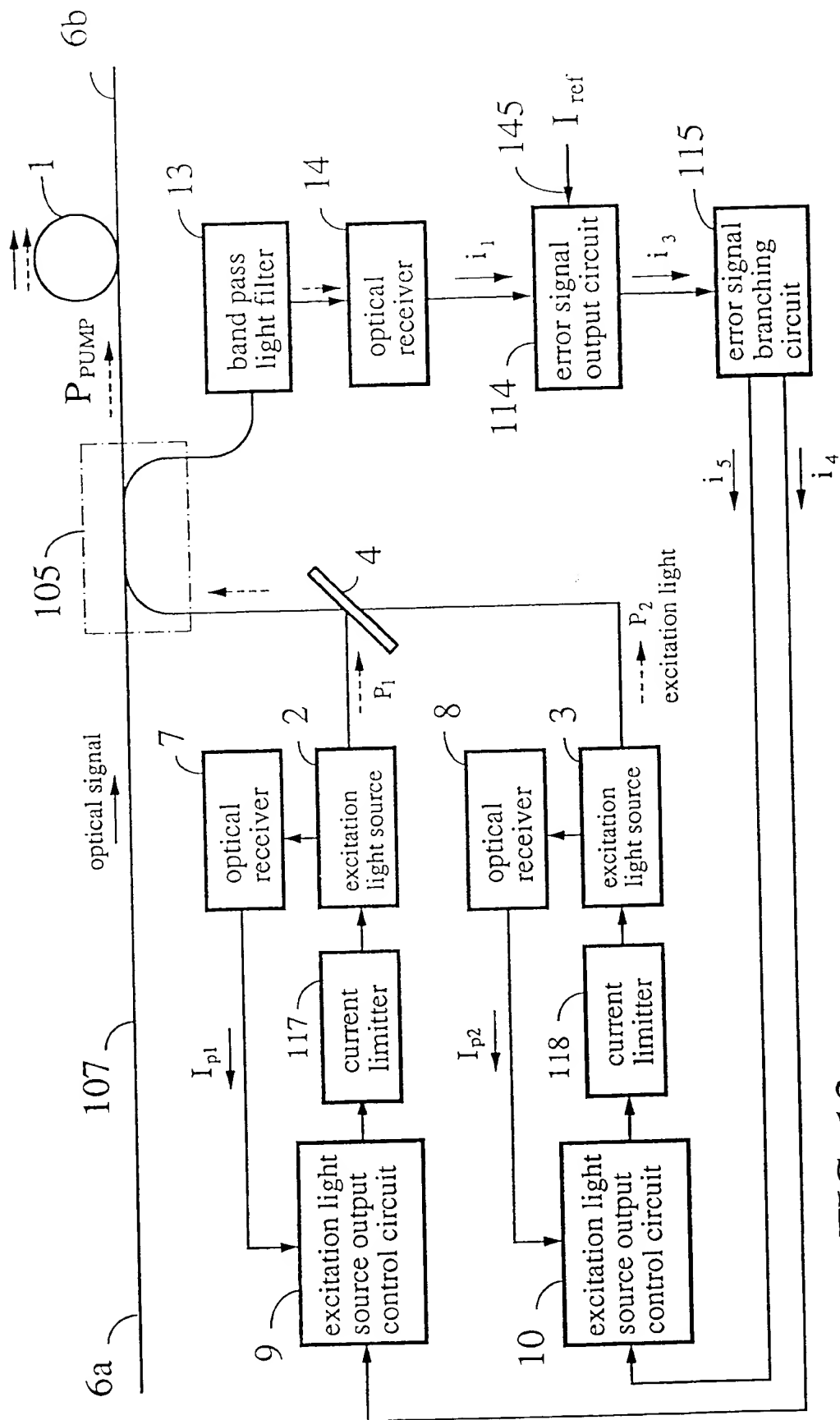


FIG. 13

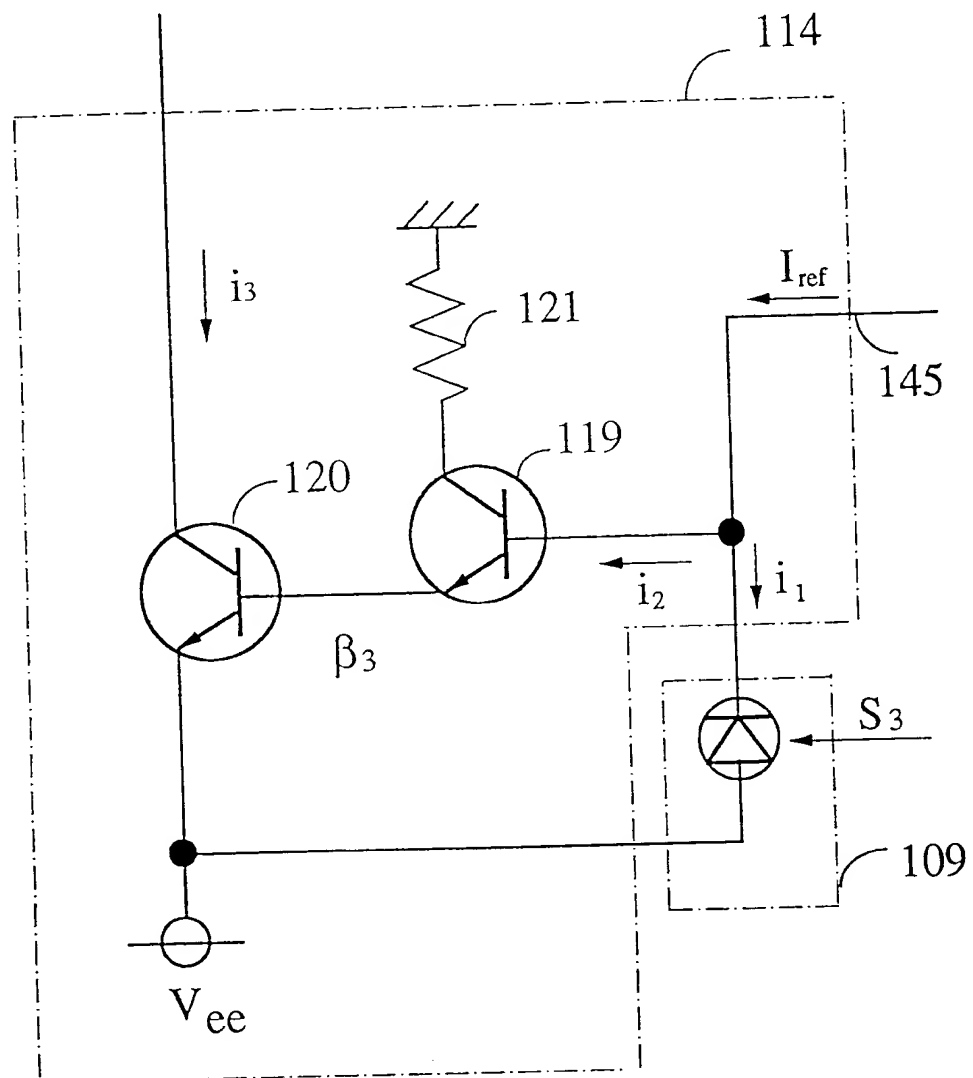


FIG. 14

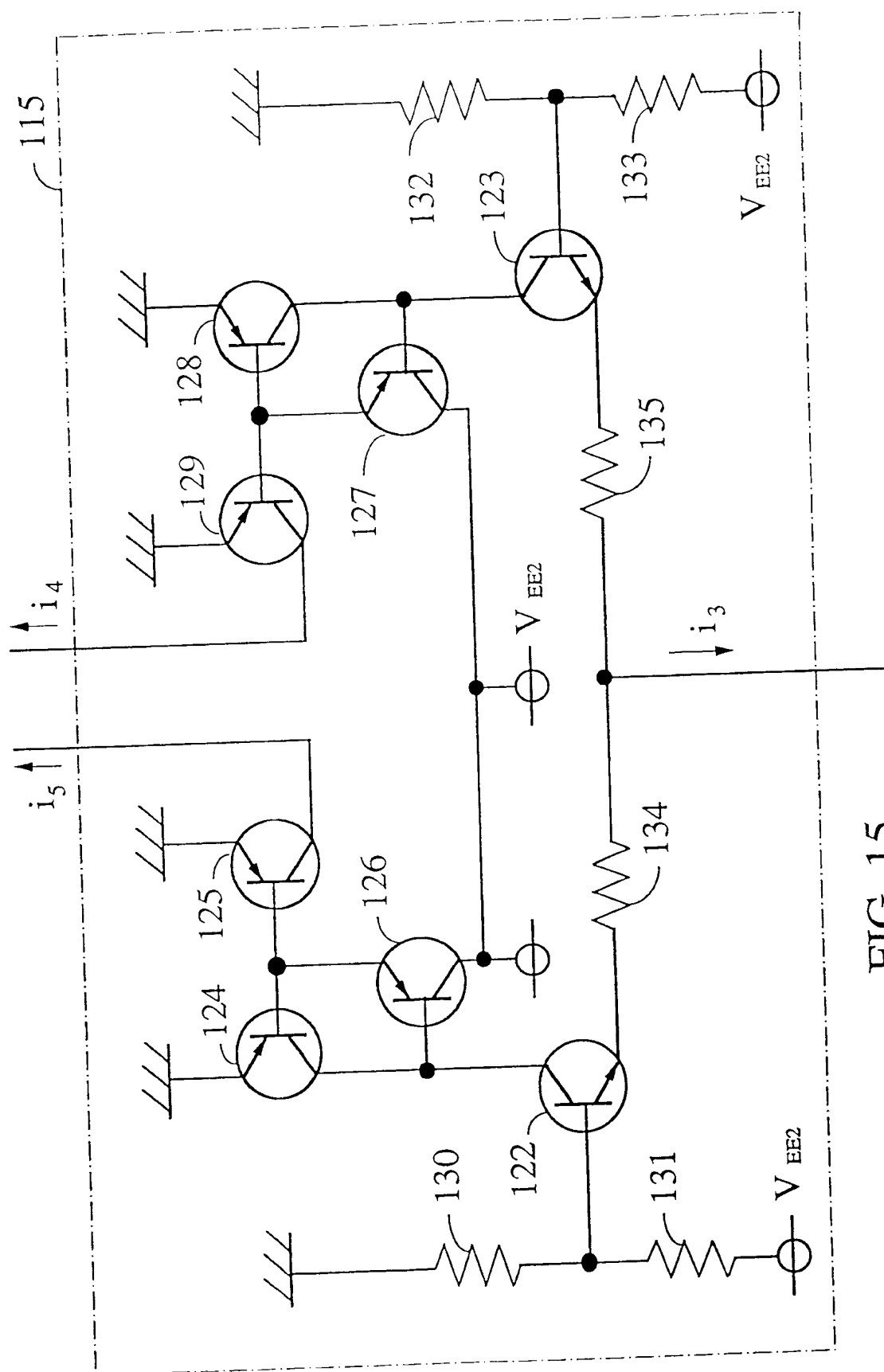


FIG. 15

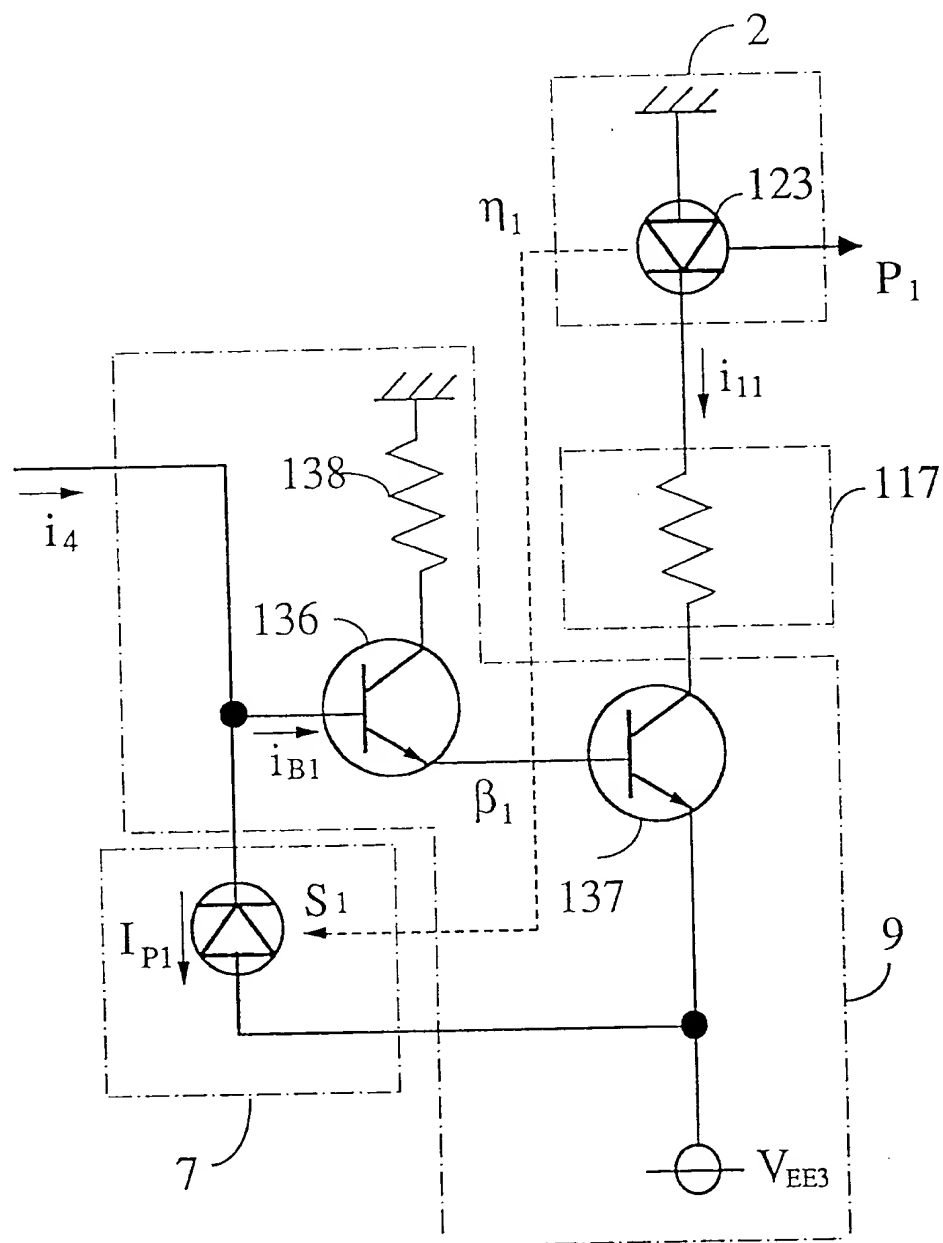


FIG. 16

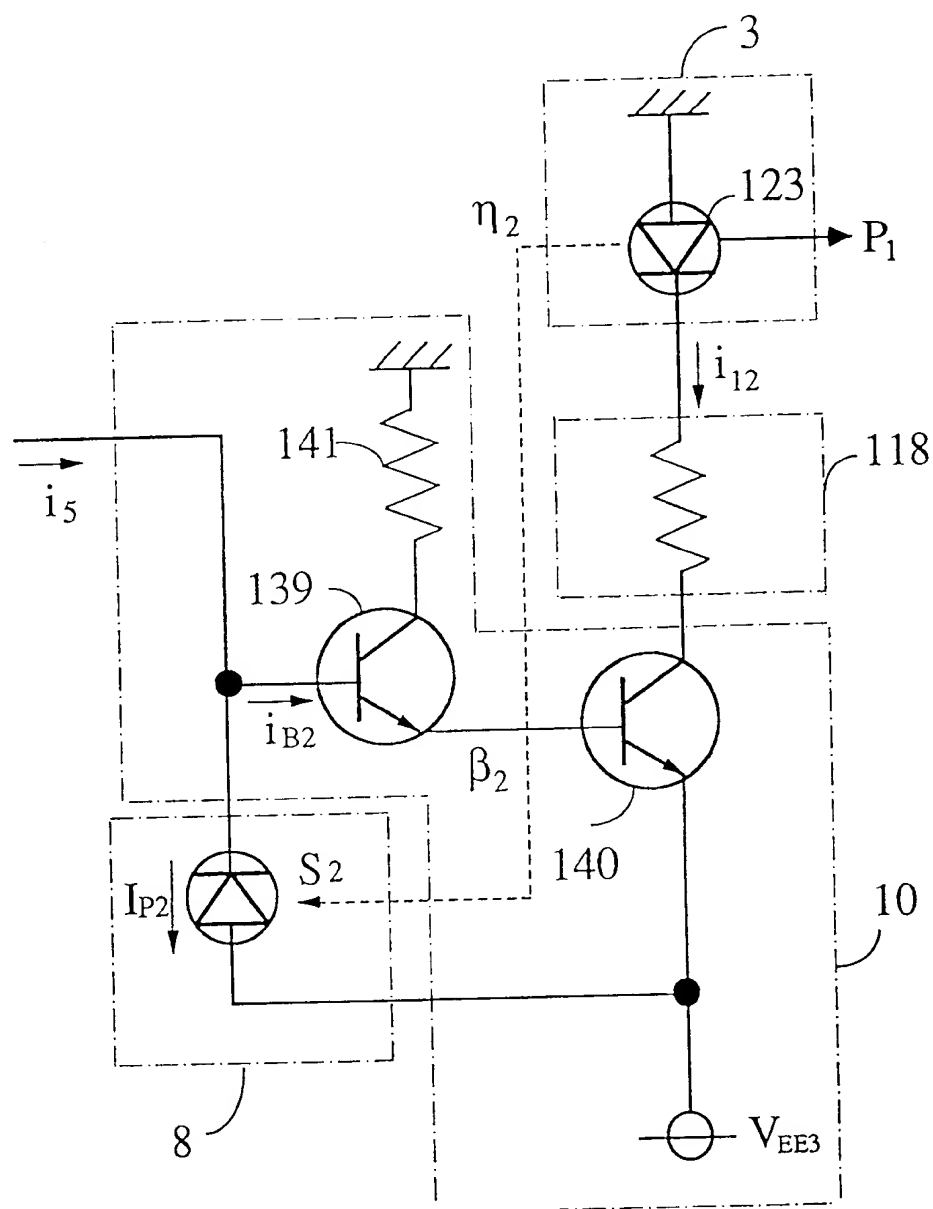


FIG. 17

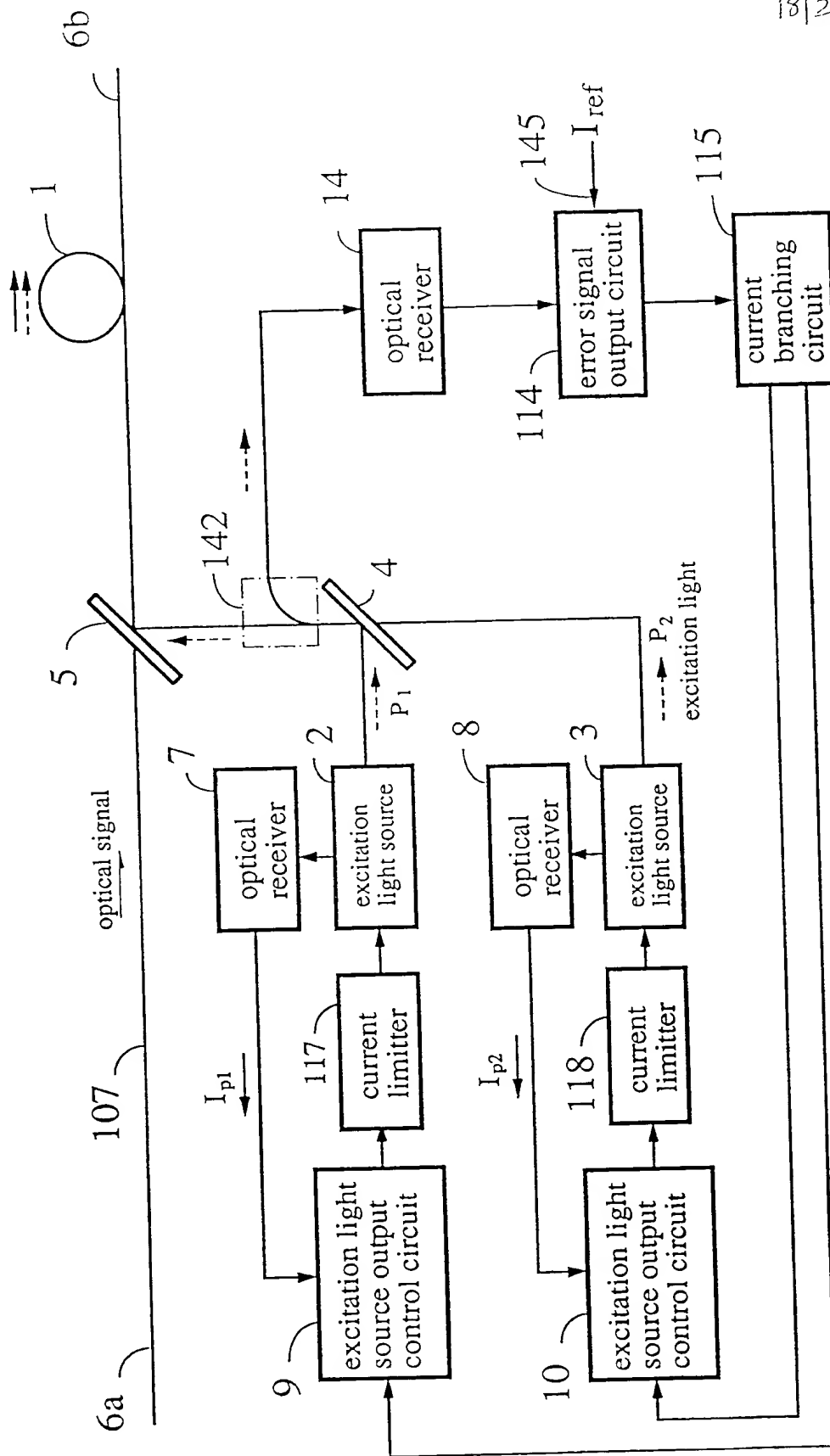


FIG. 18

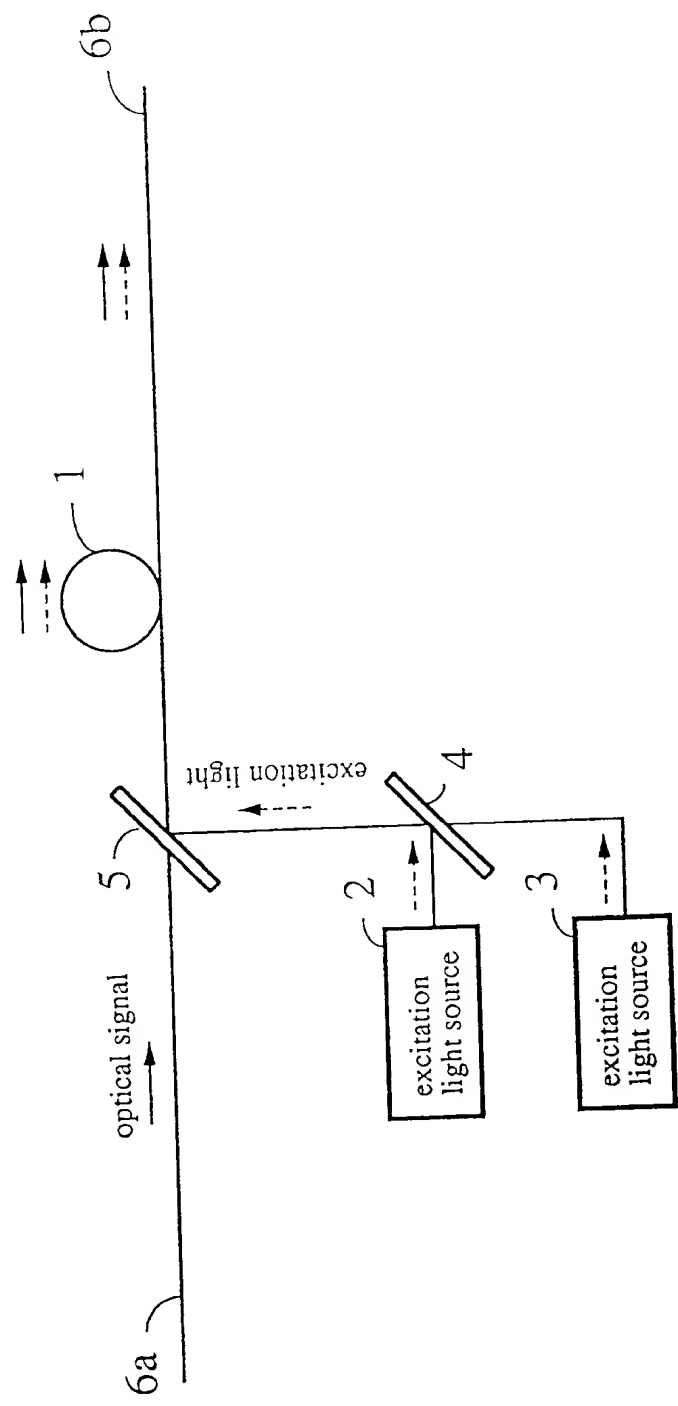


FIG. 19 (PRIOR ART)

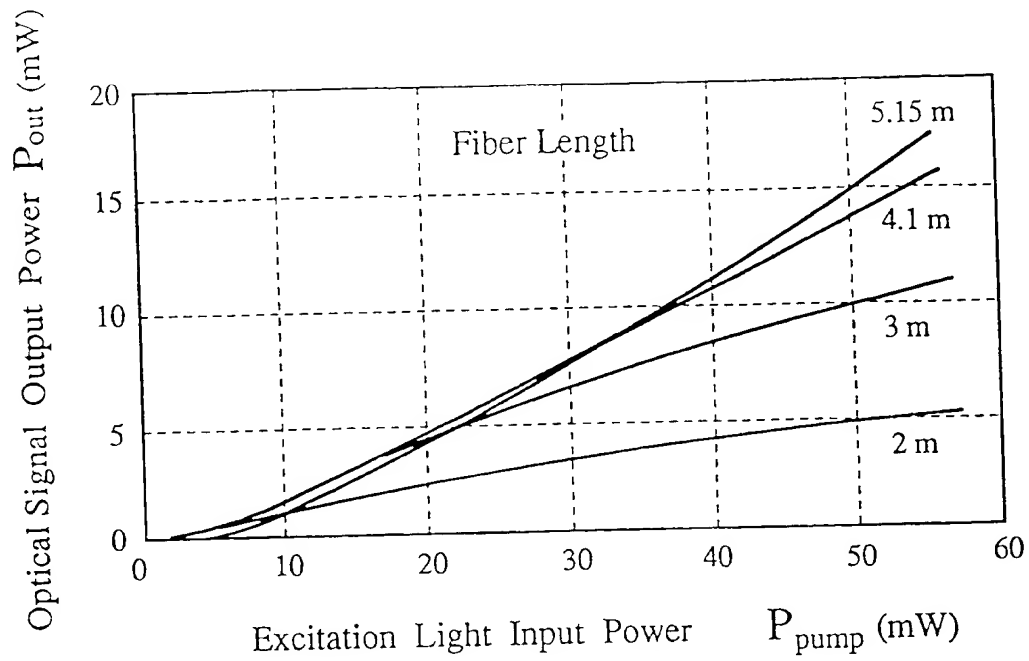


FIG. 20

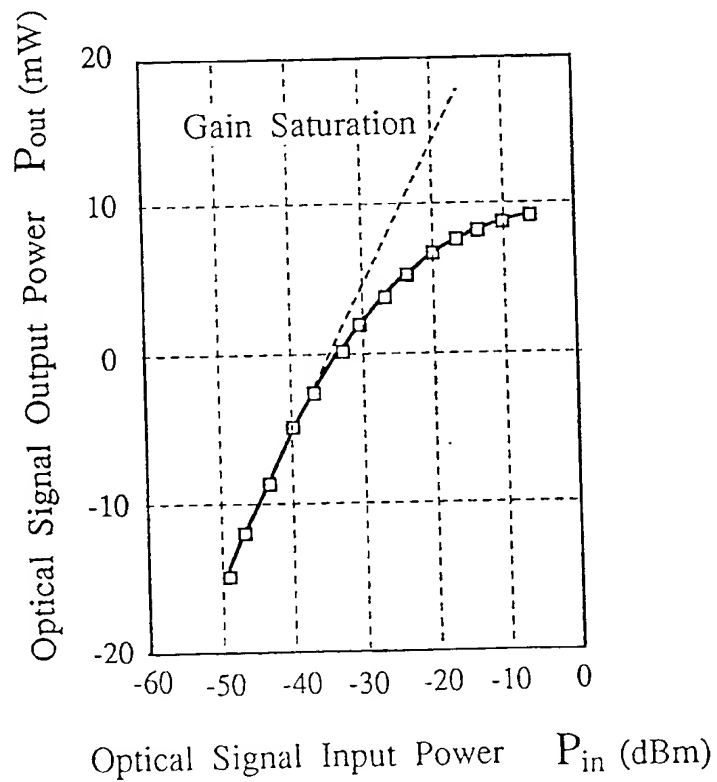


FIG. 21

OPTICAL FIBER AMPLIFIER AND ITS AMPLIFICATION METHOD

The invention relates to an optical fiber amplifier and its amplification method, more particularly to an automatic gain control of an optical fiber amplifier using a rare earth doped optical fiber in the optical communication system.

FIG 19 of the accompanying drawings is a conventional optical fiber amplifier shown in the preliminary report C-281, "light soliton amplification and propagation using Er doped optical fiber", of the national meeting in autumn, the Institute of Electronics, Information and Communication Engineers, 1989, pp4-221. In FIG. 19, 1 is an optical fiber doped with rare earth. 2 is an excitation light source. 3 is a excitation light source. 4 and 5 are optical couplers. 6a is an input terminal of the optical signal. 6b is an output terminal of the optical signal.

An operation of the conventional optical fiber amplifier shown in FIG. 19 is explained hereinafter. In FIG. 19, the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 is fabricated by doping the rare earth element erbium (Er) into a single mode fiber having the length of around several meters to several tens of meters. The optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 is connected to the optical coupler 5. The excitation light sources 2 and 3 comprise, for example, a semiconductor laser having a wavelength of $1.48\text{ }\mu\text{m}$.

The output lights from the excitation light sources 2 and 3 are synthesized to one light beam and inputted to the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 through the optical coupler 5. When the excitation light sources 2 and 3 are inputted to the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 through the optical coupler 5, the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 changes to the inverted population state. In the inverted population state, a optical signal having a wavelength of $1.53\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ or $1.55\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ inputted from the input terminal 1 is amplified by the stimulated emission effect and outputted to the output terminal 6b.

FIG 20 of the accompanying drawings shows the relation between excitation light source input power and optical signal output power and FIG 21 thereof shows the relation between optical signal input power and optical signal output power.

The conventional optical fiber amplifier shown in FIG. 19 has no control system to the output optical signal. Accordingly the output optical signal level easily varies according to the variations of the input optical signal, the output light of the excitation light source, the wavelength, the optical fiber doped with rare earth and the loss in the optical coupler. If the optical communication system is constructed using the above conventional optical fiber amplifier, since the dynamic range required for each apparatus in the system is enlarged, an operational stability of the system is difficult to attain and the construction cost increases.

It is a primary object of the present invention to provide an optical fiber amplifier and a fiber amplification method, where the output optical signal level is maintained stable if the input optical signal, the output light of the excitation light source, the wavelength, the loss of the optical fiber doped with rare earth and the optical coupler varies, and stable operation is obtained if the optical fiber system has a plurality of excitation light sources.

According to the present invention an optical fiber amplifier, having an optical fiber doped with rare earth for amplifying the light and a plurality of excitation light sources for exciting the optical signal transmitting through the optical fiber, comprises a plurality of excitation light source control circuits for controlling the output signal of the excitation light sources in order to obtain a constant optical fiber output; an error signal output circuit for outputting a difference error signal between an electrical signal level corresponding to the output optical signal from the optical fiber doped with rare earth and a reference signal level; an error signal branching circuit for branching the error signal received from the error signal output circuit to the respective

excitation light source control circuit and for feeding back the branched error signals to the excitation light source control circuits as reference signals.

5 The invention will be further described by way of non-limitative example with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which: -

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of an optical fiber amplifier of the first embodiment of the present invention.

10 FIG. 2 is a block diagram of an optical fiber amplifier of the second embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 3 shows a detailed construction of the second embodiment of the present invention shown in FIG. 2.

FIG. 4 is a block diagram of an optical fiber amplifier of the third embodiment of the present invention.

15 FIG. 5 is a block diagram of an optical fiber amplifier of the fourth embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 6 is a block diagram of an optical fiber amplifier of the fifth embodiment of the present invention.

20 FIG. 7 is a block diagram of a detailed construction of the error signal output circuit 114 in FIG. 6

FIG. 8 is a block diagram of a detailed construction of the error signal branching circuit 115.

FIG. 9 is a block diagram of a detailed construction of the excitation light source control circuits 9.

25 FIG. 10 is a block diagram of the excitation light source control circuits 10.

FIG. 11 is a block diagram of an optical fiber amplifier of the sixth embodiment of the present invention.

30 FIG. 12 is a block diagram of an optical fiber amplifier of the seventh embodiment of the present invention.

FIG.13 is a block diagram of an optical fiber amplifier of the eighth embodiment of the present invention.

FIG.14 is a circuit diagram of a detailed construction of the receiving current amplifier of the eighth embodiment of the present invention.

5 FIG.15 is a circuit diagram of a detailed construction of the error signal branching circuit of the eighth embodiment of the present invention.

FIG.16 is a circuit diagram of a detailed construction of the excitation light source control circuit 9 of the eighth embodiment of the present invention.

10 FIG.17 is a circuit diagram of a detailed construction of the excitation light source control circuit 10 of the eighth embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 18 is a block diagram of an optical fiber amplifier of the ninth embodiment of the present invention.

15 FIG. 19 is a block diagram of a conventional optical fiber amplifier.

FIG. 20 shows a relation between excitation light source input power and optical signal output power.

FIG. 21 shows a relation between optical signal input power and optical signal output power.

20

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of an optical fiber amplifier of the first embodiment of the present invention.

In FIG. 1, 7 is an optical coupler. 9 is an excitation light source control circuit. 11 is an optical coupler. 12 is a light detector. 13 is a band pass light filter. 14 is an optical receiver. 15 is an amplifier. 16 is a reference voltage. 17 is a differential amplifier. The light detector 12 includes the band pass light filter 13, the optical receiver 14, the amplifier 15, the reference voltage 16 and the differential amplifier 17. The bandpass light filter 13 includes, for example, a multi layer dielectric, which causes
30 the optical signal having a wavelength of 1.53 μm and 1.55 μm to pass and

the excitation light having a wavelength of $1.48\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ to prevent to pass. Other reference numbers in FIG.1 are the same as those used for the same portions or the corresponding portions in FIG. 19.

5 The operation of the optical fiber amplifier of the first embodiment of the present invention shown in FIG. 1 is explained hereinafter. The excitation light from the excitation light source 2 is inputted to the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 through the optical coupler 5. On the other hand, the optical signal from the input terminal 6a is inputted to the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 through the optical coupler 5 and amplified.

10 A part of the amplified optical signal is branched by the optical coupler 11 together with the excitation light and inputted to the band pass light filter 13. The bandpass light filter 13 prevents the excitation light having a wavelength of $1.48\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ to pass and causes the optical signal having a wavelength of $1.53\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ and $1.55\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ to pass to the optical receiver 14.

15 The optical receiver 14 converts the received optical signal to an electrical signal and outputs it to the amplifier 15. The amplifier 15 amplifies the electrical signal to a predetermined level and outputs it to the differential amplifier 17. The differential amplifier 17 compares the signal from the amplifier 15 with a reference voltage 16 and outputs an error signal to the excitation light source output control circuit 9. The excitation light source
20 output control circuit 9 connected to the excitation light source 2 controls an output of the excitation light source 2 in the feed-back loop in response to the output error signal from the differential amplifier 17. Since the output optical signal outputted from the output terminal 6b is in proportion
25 to the excitation light input power inputted to the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 as shown in FIG. 20, the optical signal output power can be controlled so as to maintain the constant value by controlling the output power of the excitation light source 2 in the feed-back loop.

In FIG. 1, the first feed-back loop includes the optical receiver 7, the
30 excitation light source output control circuit 9 and the excitation light

source 2. The second feed-back loop includes the light output detector 12, the excitation light source output control circuit 9 and the excitation light source 2. The response time constant of the first feed-back loop is selected to be much smaller than that of the second feed-back loop.

5 When the optical signal inputted to the light output detector 12 maintains a constant level, the output level of the excitation light source 2 is controlled to be a desired constant value by the first feed-back loop. Therefore, the variation of the threshold current and differential quantization efficiency are absorbed if the output of the excitation light
10 sources 2 varies by the ambient temperature variation. And the output level of the excitation light sources 2 is maintained constant.

 When the optical signal level inputted to the light output detector 12 varies in response to the variation of the input optical signal level inputted to the input terminal 6a, the wavelength of the excitation light source and
15 the loss of the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 and the optical coupler 5 and 11, the output error signal of the light output detector 12 varies in the second feed-back loop. The output error signal of the light output detector 12 controls the output optical signal levels generated from the excitation light sources 2 through the second feed-back loop. As a result,
20 the optical signal output from the output terminal 6b is maintained at a desired constant value.

 FIG. 2 is a block diagram of an optical fiber amplifier of the second embodiment of the present invention.

 In FIG. 2, 7 and 8 are optical receivers. 9 and 10 are excitation light
25 source control circuits. 11 is an optical coupler. 12 is a light detector. 13 is a band pass light filter. 15 is an amplifier. 16 is a reference voltage. 17 is a differential amplifier. The light detector 12 includes the band pass light filter 13, the optical receiver 14, the amplifier 15, the reference voltage 16 and the differential amplifier 17. The bandpass light filter 13 includes, for
30 example, a multi layer dielectric, which causes the optical signal having a

wavelength of 1.53 μm and 1.55 μm to pass and the excitation light having a wavelength of 1.48 μm to prevent to pass. Other reference numbers in FIG.2 are the same as those used for the same portions or the corresponding portions in FIG. 19.

5 The operation of the optical fiber amplifier of the second embodiment of the present invention shown in FIG. 2 is explained hereinafter. The excitation lights from the excitation light sources 2 and 3 are inputted to the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 through the optical couplers 4 and 5. On the other hand, the optical signal from the input
10 terminal 6a is inputted to the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 through the optical coupler 5 and amplified.

A part of the amplified optical signal is branched by the optical coupler 11 together with the excitation light and inputted to the band pass light filter 13. The bandpass light filter 13 prevents the excitation light
15 having a wavelength of 1.48 μm to pass and causes the optical signal having a wavelength of 1.53 μm and 1.55 μm to pass to the optical receiver 14. The optical receiver 14 converts the received optical signal to an electrical signal and outputs it to the amplifier 15. The amplifier 15 amplifies the electrical signal to a predetermined level and outputs it to the differential
20 amplifier 17. The differential amplifier 17 compares the signal from the amplifier 15 with a reference voltage 16 and outputs an error signal to the excitation light source output control circuits 9 and 10. The excitation light source output control circuit 9 connected to the excitation light source 2 and the optical receiver 7 controls an output of the excitation light source 2 in
25 the feed-back loop in response to the output error signal from the differential amplifier 17 and the optical receiver 7. The excitation light source output control circuit 10 connected to the excitation light source 3 and the optical receiver 8 controls an output of the excitation light source 3 in the feed-back loop in response to the output error signal from the
30 differential amplifier 17 and the optical receiver 8. Since the output optical

signal outputted from the output terminal 6b is in proportion to the excitation light input power inputted to the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 as shown in FIG. 20, the optical signal output power can be controlled so as to maintain the constant value by controlling the output power of the excitation light sources 2 and 3 in the feed-back loop.

In FIG. 2, the first feed-back loop includes the optical receivers 7 and 8, the excitation light source output control circuits 9 and 10, and the excitation light sources 2 and 3. The second feed-back loop includes the light output detector 12, the excitation light source output control circuits 9 and 10, and the excitation light sources 2 and 3. The response time constant of the first feed-back loop is selected to be much smaller than that of the second feed-back loop.

When the optical signal inputted to the light output detector 12 maintains a constant level, the output levels of the excitation light source 2 and 3 are controlled to be a desired constant value by the first feed-back loop. Therefore, the variation of the threshold current and differential quantization efficiency are absorbed if the outputs of the excitation light sources 2 and 3 vary by the ambient temperature variation. The output levels of the excitation light sources 2 and 3 are maintained constant.

When the optical signal level inputted to the light output detector 12 varies in response to the variation of the input optical signal level inputted to the input terminal 6a, the wavelength of the excitation light source and the loss of the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 and the optical coupler 4, 5 and 11, the output error signal of the light output detector 12 varies in the second feed-back loop. The output error signal of the light output detector 12 controls the output optical signal levels generated from the excitation light sources 2 and 3 through the second feed-back loop. As a result, the optical signal output from the output terminal 6b is maintained at a desired constant value.

FIG. 3 shows a detailed construction of the second embodiment of the

present invention shown in FIG. 2. In FIG. 3, more detailed operation of the second embodiment is explained hereinafter. In FIG.3, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6a, 6b, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 are the same as those in FIG. 2. In FIG. 3, 18 is a resistance. 19 is an operational amplifier. 20, 21, 22 and 23 are resistance. 24 and 25 are transistors connected as a darlington pair. 26 is a power source. 27, 28 and 29 are resistances. 30 is a capacitor. 31 and 32 are transistors connected as a darlington pair. 33 is a power source. 34, 35 and 36 are resistances. 37 is a capacitor.

The connection of FIG. 3 is explained hereinafter. The light detector 12 includes the band pass light filter 13, the optical receiver 14, resistances 18, 20, 21, 22, and 23, and an operational amplifier 19. The output optical signal passed through the band pass light filter 13 is converted to a current signal in the optical receiver 14, then converted to a voltage signal at the resistor 18. The voltage signal at the resistor 18 is applied to the differential amplifier comprised the operational amplifier 19, and the resistors 20, 21, 22 and 23 and compared with the reference voltage V_{ref} 16. The differential output of the two input signals is amplified and outputted to the excitation light source output control circuits 9 and 10.

The excitation light source output control circuit 9 includes the transistors 24 and 25, the power source 26, and resistors 27, 28 and 29, and the capacitor 30. The cathode terminal of the excitation light source 2 is connected to one port of the resistor 28 and the anode terminal of it is connected to the earth. The cathode of the optical receiver 7 is connected to the base terminal of the transistor 25 and the anode of it is connected to the power source 26. The capacitor 30 is connected between the base of the transistor 25 and the earth for bypassing the high frequency component. The output signal from the light detector 12 is applied to the base terminal of the transistor 25 through the resistor 27.

The excitation light source output control circuit 10 includes the transistors 31 and 32, the power source 33, resistances 34, 35 and 36, and

the capacitor 37. Other connections are similar to those of the excitation light source output control circuit 9, and thus the explanation of the detailed connections are omitted.

An operation of the second embodiment of the present invention is explained using equations. Variables used in the equations are defined as follows.

- P_{in} : optical signal input level
- P_{out} : optical signal output level
- G : gain of the optical fiber amplifier
- 10 P_{pump} : excited light level at the input terminal of the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 (output level of the optical coupler 5)
- P_1 : light output level of the excitation light source 2
- P_2 : light output level of the excitation light source 3
- k_1 : total passing losses through the optical coupler 4 and 5 for the
15 excited light
- k_2 : total losses of branching loss of the optical coupler 11 and passing
loss
through the bandpass light filter 13 for the optical signal
- S_m : receiving sensitivity of the optical receiver 14
- 20 R_m : resistance value of the load resistance 18 for the optical receiver 14
- G_m : gain of the differential amplifier 17
- α_1 : receiving sensitivity of the light receiver 7
- α_2 : receiving sensitivity of the light receiver 8
- β_1 : current amplification factor of the darlington transistor 24, 25
- 25 β_2 : current amplification factor of the darlington transistor 31,32
- η_1 : differential quantization efficiency of the laser diode used for the
excitation light source 2
- η_2 : differential quantization efficiency of the laser diode used for the
excitation light source 3

- i₁₁ : direct bias current of the laser diode used for the excitation light source 2
- i₁₂ : direct bias current of the laser diode used for the excitation light source 3
- 5 I_{th1} : threshold current of the laser diode used for the excitation light source 2
- I_{th2} : threshold current of the laser diode used for the excitation light source 3
- I_{p1} : light current of the optical receiver 7 used for the excitation light source 2
- 10 I_{p2} : light current of the optical receiver 8 used for the excitation light source 3
- V_{be1} : voltage between the base and the emitter of the darlington transistor 24, 25
- 15 V_{be2} : voltage between the base and the emitter of the darlington transistor 31, 32
- R₁ : resistance of the resistor 27
- R₂ : resistance of the resistor 34
- V_{ee} : voltage of the power source 26, 33
- 20 V₀ : output voltage of the light detector 12
- V_{ref} : reference voltage

The output voltage V₀ is obtained in the following equation.

$$V_0 = G_m \cdot (S_m \cdot R_m \cdot k_2 \cdot P_{out} - V_{ref}) \quad (1)$$

25

The light output levels P₁ and P₂ of the excitation light sources 2 and 3 are obtained in the following equation, respectively.

$$P_1 = \eta_1 \cdot (I_{11} - I_{th1}) \quad (2)$$

$$P_2 = \eta_2 \cdot (I_{12} - I_{th2}) \quad (3)$$

Therefore an excited light level P_{pump} at the input terminal of the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 is obtained as follows.

$$P_{\text{pump}} = K_1 \cdot (P_1 + P_2) \quad (4)$$

5

The light output levels I_{p1} and I_{p2} of the optical receivers 7 and 8 are obtained as follows, respectively

$$I_{p1} = \alpha_1 \cdot P_1 \quad (5)$$

$$I_{p2} = \alpha_1 \cdot P_2 \quad (6)$$

10

In the direct current equivalent circuits of the excitation light source output control circuits 9 and 10, the following equations are obtained.

$$V_{ee} = V_0 + V_{be1} + R_1 \cdot (I_{l1} / \beta_1 + I_{p1}) \quad (7)$$

$$V_{ee} = V_0 + V_{be2} + R_2 \cdot (I_{l2} / \beta_2 + I_{p1}) \quad (8)$$

15

From the equation (2) to equation (8), the light output levels P_1 and P_2 of the laser diodes used for the excitation light sources 2 and 3 are obtained as follows.

$$P_1 = \gamma_1 \cdot \{ (V_{ee} - V_{be1}) / R_1 - I_{th1} / \beta_1 \} - V_0 \cdot \gamma_1 / R_1 \quad (9)$$

20

$$P_2 = \gamma_2 \cdot \{ (V_{ee} - V_{be2}) / R_2 - I_{th2} / \beta_2 \} - V_0 \cdot \gamma_2 / R_2 \quad (10)$$

But,

$$\gamma_1 = 1 / [\alpha_1 \cdot \{ 1 + 1 / (\alpha_1 \cdot \beta_1 \cdot \eta_1) \}] \quad (11)$$

$$\gamma_2 = 1 / [\alpha_2 \cdot \{ 1 + 1 / (\alpha_2 \cdot \beta_2 \cdot \eta_2) \}] \quad (12)$$

25

Accordingly, the excited light level P_{pump} at the input terminal of the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 is obtained as follows.

$$\begin{aligned} P_{\text{pump}} &= A - B \cdot V_0 \\ &= A - B \cdot G_m \cdot (S_m \cdot R_m \cdot k_2 \cdot P_{\text{out}} - V_{\text{ref}}) \end{aligned} \quad (13)$$

But,

$$A = k_1 \cdot [\gamma_1 \cdot \{ (V_{ee} - V_{be1}) / R_1 - I_{th1} / \beta_1 \} + \gamma_2 \cdot \{ (V_{ee} - V_{be2}) / R_2 - I_{th2} / \beta_2 \}] \quad (14)$$

$$B = k_1 \cdot (\gamma_1 / R_1 + \gamma_2 / R_2) \quad (15)$$

Since the optical signal output level P_{out} relates to the excitation light input level P_{pump} and the optical signal input level P_{in} as shown in FIG. 20 and FIG. 21, respectively, the relation of P_{pump} and P_{in} is obtained in the following equation if the fiber length of the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 is fixed.

$$P_{out} = G_0 (P_{in}) \cdot P_{pump} \cdot P_{in} \quad (16)$$

Where, $G_0 (P_{in}) \cdot P_{pump}$ is a gain of the optical fiber amplifier, and G_0 is a function of the optical signal input level P_{in} . From the equations (13) and (16), the optical signal output level P_{out} is finally obtained as follows.

$$P_{out} = G_0 \cdot P_{in} \cdot (A + B \cdot G_m \cdot V_{ref}) / (1 + B \cdot G_m \cdot k_2 \cdot S_m \cdot R_m \cdot G_0 \cdot P_{in}) \quad (17)$$

In the equation (17), especially,

$$\text{In the case of } B \cdot G_m \cdot k_2 \cdot S_m \cdot R_m \cdot G_0 \cdot P_{in} \gg 1 \quad (18)$$

P_{out} has no relation with G_0 and P_{in} as shown in the following equation.

$$P_{out} = (A + B \cdot G_m \cdot V_{ref}) / B \cdot G_m \cdot k_2 \cdot S_m \cdot R_m \quad (19)$$

In the equation 11 and 12,

$$\alpha_1 \cdot \beta_1 \cdot \eta_1 \gg 1 \quad (20)$$

$$\alpha_2 \cdot \beta_2 \cdot \eta_2 \gg 1 \quad (21)$$

In equation 14 and 15,

$$V_{ee} / R_1 \gg V_{be1} / R_1 + I_{th1} / \beta_1 \quad (22)$$

When the following condition is satisfied,

$$V_{ee} / R_2 \gg V_{be2} / R_2 + I_{th2} / \beta_2 \quad (23)$$

The equation 19 is abbreviated as follows.

$$P_{out} = (V_{ee} + G_m \cdot V_{ref}) / (G_m \cdot k_2 \cdot S_m \cdot R_m) \quad (24)$$

From the above equation it is easily understood that the optical signal output level P_{out} is controlled to be constant in spite of the parameters of optical signal input level P_{in} and the laser diode used for excitation light sources 2 and 3, and the parameters of the excitation light source output

Embodiment 3

FIG. 4 is a block diagram of an optical fiber amplifier of the third embodiment of the present invention. 1 ~ 17 in FIG. 1 are the same as those in FIG 2. In the present embodiment, the operation of the circuit is the same as that of FIG. 2. The only difference from FIG. 2 is in that the direction of excitation light inputted from the optical coupler 5 to the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 is inverted for the optical signal.

Embodiment 4

FIG. 5 is a block diagram of an optical fiber amplifier of the fourth embodiment of the present invention. 1 ~ 17 in FIG. 1 are the same as those in FIG 2. 38 is an optical coupler. In the present embodiment, the operation of the circuit is the same as that of FIG. 2 and FIG. 4. The only difference from FIG. 2 and FIG. 4 is in that the excitation lights are inputted to the input terminal and the output terminal of the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 from the optical coupler 5 and from the optical

coupler 38, respectively.

In the above embodiment, one or two excitation light source are supplied to the circuit, but a plurality of excitation light sources can be supplied to the circuit in a similar manner for obtaining similar functions.

5

Embodiment 5

FIG. 6 is a block diagram of an optical fiber amplifier of the fifth embodiment of the present invention. The components in FIG. 6 are identical or comparable to those referred to by the same symbols in FIG. 19 and their explanation will be omitted. In FIG. 6, 7 and 8 are optical receivers for converting a part of the output light from the excitation light sources 2 and 3 to electrical signals, respectively. 9 and 10 are excitation light source control circuits for receiving a part of the output signals of the excitation light sources 2 and 3 and for controlling the output light from the excitation light sources 2 and 3 in the feed-back loop, respectively. 11 is an optical coupler for branching an amplified output optical signal received from the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1. 13 is a band pass light filter which prevents the excitation light having a wavelength of $1.48\ \mu\text{m}$ to pass and causes the optical signal having a wavelength of $1.53\ \mu\text{m}$ or $1.55\ \mu\text{m}$ to pass to an optical receiver 12. 14 is an optical receiver for converting the light received from the band pass light filter 13 to an electrical signal. 114 is an error signal output circuit for outputting a difference between the electrical signal level corresponding to the output optical signal of the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 (the output level of the optical receiver 14) and the reference signal. 115 is an error signal branching circuit which branches the error signal and outputting branched signals to the excitation light source control circuits 9 and 10, respectively, for controlling the excitation light sources 2 and 3 in the feed-back loops. 145 is an input terminal for the reference current. 146 and 147 are input terminals for the reference currents corresponding to the excitation light

source control circuits 9 and 10, respectively.

FIG. 7 is a detailed construction of the error signal output circuit 114. In FIG. 2, the optical receiver 14 comprises an optical receiving element 117 which receives and converts the output light from the band pass light filter 13 in FIG. 6 to an electric signal. The error signal output circuit 114 comprises transistors 118 and 119, and a resistor 132. The transistor 118 and the transistor 119 comprises a darlington current amplification circuit. The reference current input terminal 145 is connected to the base terminal of the transistor 118 and connected to the cathode terminal of the optical receiving element 117. The reference current on the reference current input terminal 145 is applied to the base terminal of the transistor 118.

FIG. 8 is a detailed construction of the error signal branching circuit 115. The error signal branching circuit 115 comprises transistors 120 and 121, resistors 139 ~ 144 and resistors 133 ~ 136 used for the current mirror circuit. The transistors 120 and 121, and the resistors 133 ~ 136 construct the differential amplification circuit.

FIG. 9 is a detailed construction of the excitation light source control circuit 9. In FIG. 9, the optical receiver 7 comprises an optical receiving element 124. The excitation light source 2 comprises a laser diode 122 and a resistor 137. The excitation light source control circuit 9 comprises transistors 125 and 126, and a resistor 138. The transistor 125 and the transistor 126 comprises a darlington current amplification circuit. Input terminal 146 is connected to the base terminal of the transistor 125 and connected to the cathode terminal of the optical receiving element 124. The reference current on the reference current input terminal 146 is applied to the base terminal of the transistor 125. The collector terminal of the transistor 126 is connected to the excitation light source 2.

FIG. 10 is a detailed construction of the excitation light source control circuit 10. In FIG. 10, the optical receiver 8 comprises an optical

receiving element 127. The excitation light source 3 comprises a laser diode 123 and a resistor 130. The excitation light source control circuit 10 comprises transistors 128 and 129, and a resistor 131. The transistor 128 and the transistor 129 comprises a darlington current amplification circuit.

5 Input terminal 147 is connected to the base terminal of the transistor 128 and connected to the cathode terminal of the optical receiving element 127. The reference current on the reference current input terminal 147 is applied to the base terminal of the transistor 128. The collector terminal of the transistor 129 is connected to the excitation light source 3.

10 The operation of the optical fiber amplifier of the fifth embodiment of the present invention shown in FIG. 6 to FIG. 10 is explained hereinafter. The excitation light from the excitation light sources 2 and 3 are inputted to the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 through the optical coupler 5. On the other hand, the optical signal from the input terminal 6a
15 is inputted to the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 through the optical coupler 5 and amplified.

A part of the amplified optical signal is branched by the optical coupler 11 together with the excitation light and inputted to the band pass light filter 13. The bandpass light filter 13 prevents the excitation light
20 having a wavelength of $1.48\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ to pass and causes the optical signal having a wavelength of $1.53\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ or $1.55\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ to pass to the optical receiver 14. The optical receiver 14 converts the received optical signal to an electrical signal and outputs it to the error signal output circuit 114. The error signal output circuit 114 compares the electrical signal received from the optical
25 receiver 14 with a reference current I_{ref} and amplifies the resultant signal to a desired level and outputs it to the error signal branching circuit 115. The error signal branching circuit 115 branches the signal received from the error signal output circuit 114 to the excitation light source output control circuits 9 and 10. The excitation light source output control circuit
30 9, connected to the excitation light source 2 and the optical receiver 7

which receives a part of the output light of the excitation light source 2, controls an output of the excitation light source 2 in the feed-back loop in response to the output error signal from the error signal branching circuit 115. The excitation light source output control circuit 10, connected to the
 5 excitation light source 3 and the optical receiver 8 which receives a part of the output light of the excitation light source 3, controls an output of the excitation light source 3 in the feed-back loop in response to the output error signal from the error signal branching circuit 115. Since the output optical signal outputted from the output terminal 6b is in proportion to the
 10 excitation light input power inputted to the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 as shown in FIG. 20, the optical signal output power can be controlled so as to maintain a constant value by controlling the output power of the excitation light sources 2 and 3 in the feed-back loop.

In FIG. 6, the first feed-back loop includes the optical receiver 7 (or
 15 8), the excitation light source output control circuit 9 (or 10) and the excitation light source 2 (or 3). The second feed-back loop includes the optical receiver 14, the error signal output circuit 114, the error signal branching circuit 115, the excitation light source output control circuit 9 (or 10) and the excitation light source 2 (or 3). The response time constant
 20 of the first feed-back loop is selected to be much smaller than that of the second feed-back loop.

When the optical signal inputted to the band pass light filter 13 maintains a constant level, the output levels of the excitation light sources 2 and 3 are controlled to be desired constant values by the first feed-back
 25 loop. Therefore, the variation of the threshold current and differential quantization efficiency are absorbed if the outputs of the excitation light sources 2 and 3 vary by the ambient temperature variation, and the output levels of the excitation light sources 2 and 3 are maintained constant.

When the optical signal level inputted to the band pass light filter 13
 30 varies in response to the variation of the input optical signal level inputted

to the input terminal 6a, the wavelength of the excitation light source and the loss of the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 and the optical couplers 4, 5 and 11, the output error signal of the error signal output circuit 114 varies in the second feed-back loop. Then the output error signal from the error signal output circuit 114 is controlled to be a desired value by controlling the excitation light sources 2 and 3 through the first feed-back loop. As a result, the optical signal output from the output terminal 6b is maintained at a desired constant value. As described above, if the circuit is designed so that the response time constant of the first feed-back loop is selected to be much smaller than that of the second feed-back loop, the amplified output optical signal level can be controlled to be always constant.

FIG. 7 shows a detailed construction of the error signal output circuit 114 in FIG. 6. An operation of the first embodiment of the present invention is explained using formulas. Variables used in the formulas are defined as follows.

Each line current : i_2 , i_3 , i_4 and i_5

I_{ref} : reference current

S_m : receiving sensitivity of the optical receiver 117

K_2 : total losses of branching loss of the optical coupler 11 and passing loss

through the bandpass light filter 13 for the optical signal

P_{out} : optical signal output level

β_3 : current amplification factor of the darlington transistors 118, 119

The following equation is obtained in FIG. 7.

$$i_2 = i_1 - i_3 \quad (25)$$

$$i_1 = I_{ref} \quad (26)$$

$$i_3 = S_m \cdot K_2 \cdot P_{out} \quad (27)$$

$$i_2 = I_{ref} - S_m \cdot K_2 \cdot P_{out} \quad (28)$$

$$i_5 = \beta_3 \cdot i_2$$

$$= \beta_3 (I_{ref} - S_m \cdot K_2 \cdot P_{out}) \quad (29)$$

An operation of the error signal branching circuit 115 is explained using FIG. 8. The error signal branching circuit 115 distributes the error signal received from the error signal output circuit 114 to the excitation light source output control circuits 9 and 10. The transistors 120 and 121 and the resistors 133, 134, 135 and 136 construct a differential amplification circuit. The current i_{12} and i_7 can be arbitrarily distributed by setting the emitter voltage of the transistors 120 and 121 and by selecting appropriate resistance values for the resistors 133, 134, 135 and 136.

Assume that a distribution factor be $a : b$, then,

$$a_1 = a / (a + b) \quad (30)$$

$$b_1 = b / (a + b) \quad (31)$$

Then,

$$\begin{aligned} i_7 &= a_1 \cdot i_5 \\ &= a_1 \cdot \beta_3 (I_{ref} - S_m \cdot K_2 \cdot P_{out}) \end{aligned} \quad (32)$$

$$\begin{aligned} i_{12} &= b_1 \cdot i_5 \\ &= b_1 \cdot \beta_3 (I_{ref} - S_m \cdot K_2 \cdot P_{out}) \end{aligned} \quad (33)$$

The output currents i_7 and i_{12} are branched as shown in the equations (32) and (33).

An operation of the excitation light source output control circuit 9 is explained using FIG. 9. The excitation light source output control circuit 9 compensates for the variation of the differential quantization efficiency (η_1) and the threshold current (I_{th2}) of the laser diode 122 used for the excitation light source 2.

Assume that parameters be as follows,

K_3 : coupling loss from the excitation light source 2 to the optical receiver

7

S_{m1} : receiving sensitivity of the optical receiver 7

5 P_1 : light output level of the excitation light source 3

β_1 : current amplification factor of the darlington transistor 125, 126

K_4 : coupling loss from the excitation light source 3 to the optical receiver

8

10 κ : output branch ratio of the optical coupler 11

K_1 : total passing loss of optical couplers 4 and 5 for the excitation light

P_{in} : optical signal input level

then, from FIG. 9,

$$15 \quad i_6 = i_7 - i_8 \quad (34)$$

$$i_8 = S_{m1} \cdot K_3 \cdot P_{out} \quad (35)$$

$$P_1 = \eta_1 (i_{11} - I_{th1}) P_{out} \quad (36)$$

$$i_{11} = \beta_1 \cdot i_6 \quad (37)$$

20 From the equation(35) , (36) and (37) , i_8 is obtained as follows.

$$i_8 = S_{m1} \cdot K_3 \cdot \eta_1 (\beta_1 \cdot i_6 - I_{th1}) \quad (38)$$

and,

$$P_1 = \eta_1 (\beta_1 \cdot i_6 - I_{th1}) \quad (39)$$

From the equation(10) and (14) , i_6 is obtained as follows.

$$25 \quad i_6 = i_7 - S_{m1} \cdot K_3 \cdot \eta_1 (\beta_1 \cdot i_6 - I_{th1}) \quad (40)$$

change the equation,

$$i_6 = (i_7 - S_{m1} \cdot K_3 \cdot \eta_1 - I_{th1}) / (1 + S_{m1} \cdot K_3 \cdot \eta_1 \cdot \beta_1) \quad (41)$$

Since β_1 is a sufficiently large number in the darlington connection,

$$S_m \cdot K_3 \cdot \eta_1 \cdot \beta_1 \gg 1 \quad (42)$$

5 Therefore the equation (41) is expressed as follows.

$$i_6 = (i_7 - S_{m1} \cdot K_3 \cdot \eta_1 - I_{th1}) / S_m \cdot K_3 \cdot \eta_1 \cdot \beta_1 \quad (43)$$

P_1 is obtained by substituting the equation (43) into the equation (39),

$$P_1 = i_7 / (S_m \cdot K_3) \quad (44)$$

10

From the equation (44), it is easily understood that P_1 is not influenced by η_1 and I_{th1} .

In FIG. 5, in a similar manner,

$$P_2 = i_{12} / (S_{m2} \cdot K_4) \quad (45)$$

15

From the equation (45), it is also easily understood that P_2 is not influenced by η_2 and I_{th2} .

20 Since the optical signal output level P_{out} relates to the excitation light input level P_{pump} and the optical signal input level P_{in} as shown in FIG. 9 and FIG. 10, respectively, the relation of P_{pump} and P_{in} is obtained in the following equation if the fiber length of the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 is fixed.

$$P_{out} = \kappa \cdot G_0 \cdot P_{pump} \cdot P_{in} \quad (46)$$

25

Where, $G_0 \cdot P_{pump}$ are a gain of the optical fiber amplifier, G_0 is a function of the optical signal input level.

The excitation light input P_{pump} is obtained as follows.

$$P_{pump} = K_1 (P_1 + P_2) \quad (47)$$

From the equations (32) , (33) and (47) , an equation (48) is obtained as follows.

$$P_{out} = \kappa \cdot K_1 \cdot G_0 \cdot I_{ref} \cdot \beta_3 \cdot A \cdot P_{in} / (1 + \kappa \cdot K_1 \cdot G_0 \cdot S_m \cdot K_2 \cdot \beta_3 \cdot A \cdot P_{in}) \quad (48)$$

But,

$$A = a_1 / (S_{m1} / K_3) + b_1 / (S_{m2} / K_4) \quad (49)$$

Since β_3 is a sufficiently large number in the darlington connection,

$$\kappa \cdot K_1 \cdot G_0 \cdot S_m \cdot K_2 \cdot \beta_3 \cdot A \cdot P_{in} >> 1 \quad (50)$$

$$P_{out} = I_{ref} \{ a_1 / (S_{m1} / K_3) + b_1 / (S_{m2} / K_4) \} / S_m \cdot K_2 \quad (51)$$

Therefore, the optical signal output level P_{out} has no relation with the optical signal input level P_{in} . From the equation (51), it is easily understood that dispersions of S_{m1} , K_3 , S_{m2} , K_4 is compensated by satisfying the branching ratio ($a : b$) described in FIG. 8 as follows.

$$a_1 / (S_{m1} / K_3) = b_1 / (S_{m2} / K_4) \quad (52)$$

20 Embodiment 6

FIG. 11 is a block diagram of an optical fiber amplifier of the sixth embodiment of the present invention. These components referred to by the same numbers in FIG. 11 are identical or comparable to those referred to by the same numbers in FIG. 6 and their explanation will be omitted. In the sixth embodiment, the operation of the circuit is the same as that of FIG. 6. The only difference from FIG. 6 is in that the direction of excitation light inputted from the optical coupler 5 to the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 is inverted for the optical signal.

30 Embodiment 7

FIG. 12 is a block diagram of an optical fiber amplifier of the seventh embodiment of the present invention. These components referred to by the same numbers in FIG. 12 are identical or comparable to those referred to by the same numbers in FIG. 6 and FIG. 11 and their explanation will be omitted. In the seventh embodiment in FIG. 12, the operation of the circuit is the same as that of FIG. 6. The only difference from FIG. 6 is in that the excitation lights are inputted to the input terminal and the output terminal of the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 from the optical coupler 5 and from the optical coupler 11, respectively.

In the above embodiment one or two excitation light sources are supplied to the circuit, but a plurality of excitation light sources can be supplied to the circuit in a similar manner for obtaining similar functions.

Embodiment 8

One of the embodiments of the present invention is explained using FIG. 13 to FIG. 17. FIG. 13 is a block diagram of an optical fiber amplifier of the eighth embodiment of the present invention having two excitation light sources. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6a and 6b in FIG. 13 are the same as those in FIG. 19. In FIG. 13, 105 is an optical coupler which synthesizes an input optical signal from the optical signal input terminal 6a and an excitation output light from the optical coupler 4. One of the terminals is connected to the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 and another terminal is connected to a band pass light filter 13 which includes a multi-layer dielectric film and causes the excitation light having a wavelength of 1.48 μm to pass and the optical signal having a wavelength of 1.53 μm or 1.55 μm to prevent to pass.

14 is an optical receiver for receiving a passing light through the bandpass light filter. 114 is an error signal output circuit for amplifying a difference between a receiving current from the optical receiver 14 and a reference signal inputted to the reference current input terminal 145. 115

is an error signal branching circuit for branching the current received from the error signal output circuit 114. 7 and 8 are optical receivers for receiving a part of the output light from the excitation light sources 2 and 3. 9 and 10 are excitation light source control circuits for controlling the
 5 output signals of the excitation light sources 2 and 3 in response to the output currents of error signal branching circuit 15 and the output currents of the optical receivers 7 and 8. 117 and 118 are current limiters for limiting the output currents from the excitation light source control circuits 9 and 10 to the excitation light sources 2 and 3 by the
 10 predetermined maximum values, respectively.

FIG. 14, 15, 16, and 17 are detailed circuit diagrams of the optical fiber amplifier shown in FIG. 14. FIG. 14 is a detailed circuit diagram of the error signal output circuit 114. In FIG. 14, 119 and 120 are transistors connected in a darlington pair. 121 is a resistor. FIG. 15 is a detailed
 15 circuit diagram of the error signal branching circuit 115. In FIG. 15, 122 and 123 comprises a differential amplifier. 124, 125, 126, 127, 128 and 129 are transistors which comprises mirror circuit. 130, 131, 132, 133, 134 and 135 are resistors.

FIG. 16 is a detailed circuit diagram of the excitation light source control circuit 9. In FIG. 16, 136 and 137 are transistors connected in a
 20 darlington pair. 138 is a resistor. 117 is a resistor for limiting current. FIG. 17 is a detailed circuit diagram of the excitation light source control circuit 10 as well as FIG. 16. In FIG. 17, 139 and 140 are transistors connected in a darlington pair 141 is a resistor. 118 is a resistor for
 25 limiting current.

The operation of the optical fiber amplifier of the eighth embodiment of the present invention shown in FIG. 13 is explained hereinafter. A optical signal from the input terminal 6a is inputted to the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 and is amplified in the optical fiber. On the other
 30 hand, the excitation lights from the excitation light sources 2 and 3 are

synthesized at the optical coupler 4 and outputted to the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1. A part of the light is branched from the optical coupler 5 to the band pass light filter 13.

5 The bandpass light filter 13 prevents the excitation light having a wavelength of $1.48\ \mu\text{m}$ to pass and causes the optical signal having a wavelength of $1.53\ \mu\text{m}$ or $1.55\ \mu\text{m}$ to pass to the optical receiver 14. The optical receiver 14 converts the received optical signal to an electrical signal and outputs it to the error signal output circuit 114. The error signal output circuit 114 compares the electrical signal received from the optical
10 receiver 14 with a reference current I_{ref} and amplifies a difference current and outputs it to the error signal branching circuit 115 as an error signal. The error signal branching circuit 115 branches the error signal to the excitation light source control circuits 9 and 10, respectively, at an arbitrary current branching ratio.

15 The excitation light source output control circuit 9, connected to the excitation light source 2 and the optical receiver 7 which receives a part of the output light of the excitation light source 2, controls an output of the excitation light source 2 in the first feed-back loop in response to the error signal from the error signal branching circuit 115. The excitation light
20 source output control circuit 10, connected to the excitation light source 3 and the optical receiver 8 which receives a part of the output light of the excitation light source 3, controls an output of the excitation light source 3 in the second feed-back loop in response to the error signal from the error signal branching circuit 115.

25 Since the output optical signal outputted from the output terminal 6b is in proportion to the excitation light input power inputted to the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 as shown in FIG. 20, the optical signal output power can be controlled so as to maintain the constant value by controlling the output power of the excitation light sources 2 and 3 in the feed-back
30 loop.

If one of the excitation light sources 2 and 3 degrades their output characteristics, for example the excitation light source 2, the excitation light source output control circuit 9 causes the driving current to increase for maintaining the output of the excitation light source 2 within the
 5 maximum value of the limiter 117. But if the driving current exceeds the maximum limited current value of the limiter 117, the excitation light source output control circuit 9 can not drive the excitation light sources 2 for maintaining its output to be constant. Therefore, the output level of the excitation light source 2 gradually decreases. In accordance with the
 10 decrease of the output of the excitation light source 2, the error signal output circuit 114 generates an error signal for increasing the light level of the excitation light source 3, which controls the drive current of the excitation light source output control circuit 10. The excitation light source output control circuit 10 increases the driving current of the excitation light
 15 source 3, which is normally operating, according to the error signal for maintaining the excitation light level outputted to the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 through the optical coupler 5.

In FIG. 13, a first feed-back loop includes the optical receiver 7 (or 8), the excitation light source output control circuits 9 (or 10) and the
 20 excitation light source 2 (or 3). A second feed-back loop comprises the optical receiver 14, the error signal output circuit 114, the excitation light source output control circuits 9 (or 10) and the excitation light source 2 (or 3). The response time constant of the first feed-back loop is selected to be much smaller than that of the second feed-back loop.

25 When the optical signal inputted to the optical receiver 14 maintains a constant level, the output levels of the excitation light sources 2 and 3 are controlled to be desired constant values by the first feed-back loop. Therefore, the variation of the threshold current and differential quantization efficiency are absorbed if the outputs of the excitation light
 30 sources 2 and 3 vary by the ambient temperature variation, and the output

levels of the excitation light sources 2 and 3 are maintained constant.

When the optical signal level inputted to the optical receiver 14 varies in response to the variation of the wavelength of the excitation light source and the loss of the optical coupler, the output error signal of the error
 5 signal output circuit 114 varies in the second feed-back loop. Then the output error signal from the error signal output circuit 114 is controlled to be a desired value by controlling the excitation light sources 2 and 3 through the first feed-back loop. As a result, the optical signal output from the output terminal 6b is maintained at a desired constant value. As
 10 described above, if the circuit is designed so that the response time constant of the first feed-back loop is selected to be much smaller than that of the second feed-back loop, the amplified output optical signal level can be controlled to be always stable.

An operation of the embodiment of the present invention is explained
 15 using FIG. 14 to FIG. 17. Variables used in the equations are defined as follows.

P_{pump} : excited light level at the input terminal of the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 (output level of the optical coupler 5)
 P_1 : light output level of the excitation light source 2
 20 P_2 : light output level of the excitation light source 3
 k_1 : total passing losses through the optical couplers 4 and 5 for the excited light
 k_2 : total losses of branching loss of the optical coupler 5 for the excited light and passing loss through the bandpass light filter 13 for the
 25 optical signal
 S_m : receiving sensitivity of the optical receiver 14
 I_{ref} : reference current inputted to the error signal output circuit 114
 S_1 : receiving sensitivity of the optical receiver 7 (including the coupling efficiency between the optical receiver 7 and the excitation
 30 light source 2)

- S_2 : receiving sensitivity of the optical receiver 8 (including the coupling efficiency between the optical receiver 8 and the excitation light source 3)
- β_1 : current amplification factor of the darlington transistors 136, 137
- 5 β_2 : current amplification factor of the darlington transistors 139, 140
- η_1 : differential quantization efficiency of the laser diode used for the excitation light source 2
- η_2 : differential quantization efficiency of the laser diode used for the excitation light source 3
- 10 i_{11} : direct bias current of the laser diode used for the excitation light source 2
- i_{12} : direct bias current of the laser diode used for the excitation light source 3
- I_{th1} : threshold current of the laser diode used for the excitation light source 2
- 15 I_{th2} : threshold current of the laser diode used for the excitation light source 3
- I_{p1} : light current of the optical receiver 7 used for the excitation light source 2
- 20 I_{p2} : light current of the optical receiver 8 used for the excitation light source 3

In the detailed circuit diagram of the error signal output circuit 114 of FIG. 14, the following equation is obtained.

25
$$i_2 = I_{ref} - i_1 \quad (53)$$

$$i_1 = S_3 \cdot K_2 \cdot P_{pump} \quad (54)$$

$$i_3 = \beta_3 \cdot i_2 \quad (55)$$

From the equation (53) ~ (55) , i_3 of the error signal output circuit

114 is obtained as follows.

$$i_3 = \beta_3 \cdot (I_{ref} - S_3 \cdot K_2 \cdot P_{pump}) \quad (56)$$

FIG. 15 is a circuit diagram of the error signal branching circuit 115 which branches the error signal amplified in the error signal output circuit 114 to the excitation light source control circuits 9 and 10, respectively, at an arbitrary current branching ratio. This circuit is an example which comprises a differential amplifier. In the figure, the base potential of the transistor 122 and 123 can be varied by the resistors 130, 131, 132, 133 and 134 and the output current i_4 and i_5 can be selected in an arbitrary branching ratio.

Assume that the branching ratio is $a : b$,

$$\text{and if } a_1 = a / (a + b) \quad (57)$$

$$b_1 = b / (a + b) \quad (58)$$

then, the i_4 and i_5 is obtained in the following equations.

$$i_4 = a_1 \cdot i_3 = a_1 \cdot \beta_3 \cdot (I_{ref} - S_3 \cdot K_2 \cdot P_{pump}) \quad (59)$$

$$i_5 = b_1 \cdot i_3 = b_1 \cdot \beta_3 \cdot (I_{ref} - S_3 \cdot K_2 \cdot P_{pump}) \quad (60)$$

FIG. 16 is a circuit diagram of the excitation light source control circuit 9. The circuit controls the output light level of the excitation light source 2 by the current i_4 from the error signal branching circuit 115 and light current I_{p1} from the optical receiver 7. The circuit suppresses the variation of the differential quantization efficiency η_1 of the excitation light source 2 and the variation of the light output in response to the variation of the threshold current I_{th1} of the laser diode in the excitation light source 2 generated according to the temperature variation, even if the current i_4 from the error signal branching circuit 115 is constant.

From FIG. 16, the following equations are obtained.

$$I_{B1} = i_4 - I_{p1} \quad (61)$$

$$I_{p1} = S_1 - P_1 \quad (62)$$

$$i_{11} = \beta_1 - I_{B1} \quad (63)$$

$$P_1 = \eta_1 \cdot (i_{11} - I_{th1}) \quad (64)$$

5 From the equations (61) ~ (64), the light output level P_1 of the excitation light source 2 is obtained as follows.

$$P_1 = (i_4 - I_{th1} / \beta_1) / [S_1 \{ 1 + 1 / (S_1 \cdot \beta_1 \cdot \eta_1) \}] \quad (65)$$

Since β_1 has a very large value in the darlington connection,

$$10 \quad S_1 \cdot \beta_1 \cdot \eta_1 \gg 1, \quad i_4 \gg I_{th1} / \beta_1 \quad (66)$$

then, the equation (13) can be changed as follows.

$$P_1 = i_4 / S_1 \quad (67)$$

FIG. 17 is a circuit diagram of the excitation light source control
15 circuit 10. The circuit controls the output light level of the excitation light source 3 by the current i_5 from the error signal branching circuit 115 and light current I_{p2} from the optical receiver 8.

The light output level P_2 of the excitation light source 3 is obtained
20 as follows in the same manner described above in the excitation light source control circuit 9.

$$P_2 = i_5 / S_2 \quad (68)$$

From the equation (59), (67), the light output level P_1 of the
25 excitation light source 2 is obtained as follows.

$$P_1 = a_1 \cdot \beta_3 (I_{ref} - S_3 \cdot K_2 \cdot P_{pump}) / S_1 \quad (69)$$

From the equations (60), (68), the light output level P_2 of the excitation light source 3 is obtained as follows.

$$P_2 = b_1 \cdot \beta_3 (I_{ref} - S_3 \cdot K_2 \cdot P_{pump}) / S_2 \quad (70)$$

where, P_{pump} is an excited light level inputted to the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 and is obtained as follows.

5

$$P_{pump} = K_1 (P_1 + P_2) \quad (71)$$

From the equations (67) ~ (69), P_{pump} is obtained as follows.

$$P_{pump} = K_1 \cdot \beta_3 \cdot (a_1 / S_1 + b_1 / S_2) \cdot I_{ref} / \{ 1 + K_1 \cdot K_2 \cdot S_3 \cdot \beta_3 \cdot (a_1 / S_1 + b_1 / S_2) \} \quad (72)$$

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Since β_3 has a very large value in the darlington connection,

$$P_{pump} = I_{ref} / K_2 \quad (73)$$

Therefore, the output P_{pump} of the optical coupler 4 can be controlled to have a constant value decided by the reference current I_{ref} inputted to the error signal output circuit 114 in spite of the parameters of the excitation light sources 2 and 3 and the parameters of the excitation light source control circuits 9 and 10.

20 Embodiment 9

FIG. 18 is a block diagram of an optical fiber amplifier of another embodiment of the present invention. 1 ~ 17 of FIG. 18 are the same as those in FIG 13. For example, 142 is an optical coupler having a branching ratio of 99 : 1. In the present embodiment, the operation of the circuit is the same as that of FIG. 13. The only difference from FIG. 13 is in that the optical coupler 142 is inserted between the optical coupler 4 and the optical coupler 5, and a part of the excitation light is branched from the optical coupler 142.

In the above embodiment one or two excitation light sources are supplied to the circuit, but a plurality of excitation light sources can be

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supplied to the circuit in a similar manner for obtaining similar functions.

In the above embodiment, the direction of the excitation light inputted to the optical fiber doped with rare earth 1 is the same as that of the optical signal.

But, if the direction of the excitation light inputted to the optical fiber

- 5 doped with rare earth 1 is inverted, the same effect is obtained.

CLAIMS

1. An optical fiber amplifier, comprising:
 - (a) an optical fiber for amplifying the light;
 - 5 (b) at least one excitation light source connected to the optical fiber;
 - (c) optical receivers for receiving a part of output of said respective excitation light source;
 - (d) output light detecting means connected to the optical fiber for detecting an output light level;
 - 10 (e) at least one excitation light source control circuit for controlling the excitation light levels of said excitation light sources to be constant in response to the outputs of the output light detecting means and the received light quantity of said optical receivers.
- 15 2. An optical fiber amplifier, having (i) an optical fiber for amplifying the light, (ii) at least one excitation light source connected to the optical fiber, (iii) optical receivers for receiving a part of output of said respective excitation light source, (iv) output light detecting means for detecting an output light level of the optical fiber, (v) at least one excitation light source
20 control circuit for controlling the excitation light level of said excitation light sources, comprising:
 - (a) a first excitation light source control loop having an excitation light source, an optical receiver and excitation light source control means;
 - (b) a second excitation light source control loop having an excitation
25 light source, an optical fiber, output light detecting means and excitation light source control means.
3. A method of amplifying light using an optical fiber, comprising steps of:
 - (a) amplifying an optical signal by applying an optical

signal and an excitation light from excitation light sources to an optical fiber ;

(b) detecting an optical signal level amplified in the amplification process; and

5 (c) controlling excitation light levels of said excitation light sources to be constant in response to the outputs signal in the detection process.

4. An optical fiber amplifier, having an optical fiber doped with rare
10 earth for amplifying the light and at least one excitation light source for exciting the optical signal transmitting through the optical fiber, comprising:

(a) a plurality of excitation light source control circuits for controlling the output signal of the excitation light sources in order to
15 obtain a constant optical fiber output ;

(b) an error signal output circuit for outputting a difference error signal between an electrical signal level corresponding to the output optical signal from the optical fiber doped with rare earth and a reference signal level;

20 (c) an error signal branching circuit for branching the error signal received from the error signal output circuit to the respective excitation light source control circuit and for feedbacking the branched error signals to the excitation light source control circuit as reference signals;

25 5. An optical fiber amplifier according to claim 4, wherein each excitation light source control circuit is constructed with Darlington connection, wherein each input terminal in said excitation light source control circuit is connected to a cathode of the optical receiver for receiving a part of the output light from the excitation light source, and to a reference
30 current input terminal for inputting the reference current, and each output

terminal is connected to the above excitation light source.

6. The optical fiber amplifier according to claim 4, wherein the error signal output circuit is constructed using Darlington connection, wherein an input terminal in the error signal output circuit is connected to a cathode of the optical receiver for receiving a part of the output light from the excitation light source, and to a reference current input terminal for inputting the reference current.

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7. An optical fiber amplifier, having an optical fiber doped with rare earth for amplifying the light and at least one excitation light source, comprising:

(a) an optical receiver for each excitation light source for receiving a part of the output of said excitation light source, respectively;

(b) a plurality of excitation light source control circuits, each circuit comprising a Darlington current amplifier and having an input terminal connected to a reference current input terminal and a cathode of the optical receivers;

(c) a plurality of current limiters for limiting the respective upper current outputted from the excitation light source control circuits to the excitation light sources;

(d) an error signal output circuit, comprising a Darlington current amplifier and having an input terminal connected to a reference current input terminal and a cathode of the light receiving devices;

(e) an error signal branching circuit, having an input terminal connected to the error signal output circuit and an output connected to the at least one excitation light source control circuit.

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8. An optical fiber amplifier constructed and arranged to operate substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and as illustrated in Figures 1 to 18 of the accompanying drawings.

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9. A method of amplifying light substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to Figures 1 to 18 of the accompanying drawings.

Patents Act 1977
Examiner's report to the Comptroller under
Section 17 (The Search Report)

Application number

9205509.4

Relevant Technical fields

(i) UK CI (Edition K) H4B: BK16, BK16D

(ii) Int CI (Edition 5) H04B

Search Examiner

ALAN STRAYTON

Databases (see over)

(i) UK Patent Office

(ii)

Date of Search

13 AUGUST 1992

Documents considered relevant following a search in respect of claims

1-6

Category (see over)	Identity of document and relevant passages	Relevant to claim(s)
X	GB 2242091 A Page 9, lines 15-19	1-6
X	EP 0415438 A2 See figure 6	1-6
X	EP 0408905 A2 See figure 2	1-6

Category	Identity of document and relevant passages	Relevant to claim(s)

Categories of documents

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